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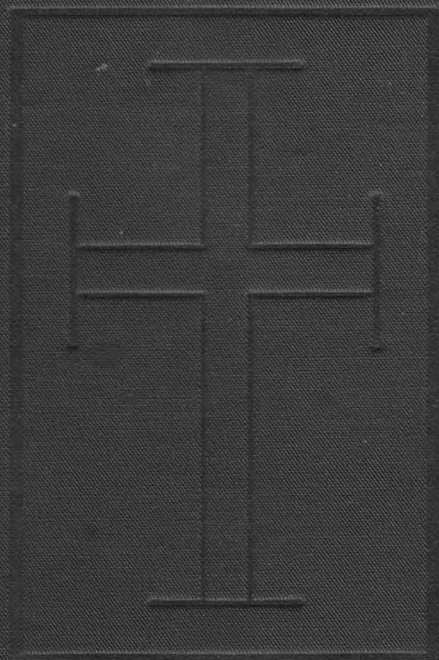
THE HISTORY  
OF THE  
PRIMITIVE  
CHURCH



LEBRETON  
*et*  
ZEILLER

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VOLUME I



MACMILLAN

THE HISTORY OF THE  
PRIMITIVE CHURCH





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# THE HISTORY OF THE PRIMITIVE † CHURCH †

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Catholic Theology at Strassburg ✦ Translated from  
the French by* ERNEST C. MESSENGER, PH.D.

VOLUME I BOOKS I & II

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## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

*The volumes here presented to the English reader constitute the first of a massive series of twenty-four volumes designed to cover the whole History of the Church from its beginning down to our own time. The General Editors, Monsieur Augustin Fliche, the Dean of the Faculty of Letters at Montpellier, and Mgr. Victor Martin, Dean of the Faculty of Catholic Theology at Strasburg, have entrusted each volume in the series to one or more specialists, thus ensuring that the whole work will have the highest scientific value. The present volumes, on the Primitive Church, are from the pen of Père Lebreton, Dean of the Faculty of Theology at the Institut Catholique in Paris, and Monsieur Jacques Zeiller, Director of Studies at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes (Sorbonne). Their work needs no further commendation than the mention of their names.*

*As to the work of translation, I have adhered to the original as faithfully as possible. Here and there I have added to the footnotes, or substituted references to English translations in the case of certain well-known works. Citations from Scripture are in the main quoted according to the version in common use amongst English Catholics, but I have not hesitated to modify this where the quotation is intended to express a sense not well brought out in the current text. For quotations from the Fathers and other ecclesiastical writers, I have followed the excellent versions given in the French, with an occasional glance at the original, or standard English translations.*

*I owe a debt of gratitude to my friend and former colleague, the Very Rev. Mgr. John M. Barton, D.D., Consultor to the Pontifical Biblical Commission, for so kindly reading through my translation, and for making many valuable suggestions, especially in matters of bibliographical detail.*

*It only remains for me to express the honour I feel it to be associated with a work of this kind, and my hope that it will be found possible to present the whole work to English readers as the several volumes appear.*

ERNEST C. MESSENGER

## FOREWORD

*By the General Editors*

OF all the branches of history, there is scarcely one which has made so much progress in the last half century as ecclesiastical history. Its growth has been favoured by a combination of favourable circumstances: the opening of the Vatican archives to all students by Pope Leo XIII, the creation at Rome, by various nations, of institutes for the study of archives or inscriptions, the founding almost everywhere of scientific societies dealing more especially with religious history, the development of auxiliary sciences, the publication of collections and catalogues which make easier the utilising of texts, the extension of historical studies in theology and canon law. Though much still remains to be done, it cannot be denied that important results have been obtained. In addition, besides the manifold works of scholarship which have elucidated or at least thrown light on so many obscure problems, great syntheses have been attempted, dealing with some special period, or the religious activity in a particular country in the East or West, or again a group of ecclesiastical institutions at a particular time. Lastly, some writers have endeavoured to give a general survey of the chief results obtained by contemporary scholarship, and to trace out, with more or less detail, the general history of the Church.

Among the last mentioned works, there are some which are deserving of all praise, and which have rendered real service. At the same time they have been criticised as being too condensed, or as not giving sufficiently numerous references, or more often, as not possessing the same scientific value in their various parts. Those who wrote them were qualified, by their personal researches, to deal with one period of ecclesiastical history; they could not be equally competent in others, and in spite of praiseworthy efforts, they have sometimes encountered obstacles which it was very difficult for them to overcome.

In fact, it seems clear at the present time that, in view of the ever

increasing number of books and articles appearing in all languages, one man cannot himself write a history of the Church from its most remote beginnings to the present day.

In contrast to what has happened in the domain of ecclesiastical history, the recent universal histories in course of publication, such as the *Histoire Générale* of G. Glotz, *Peuples et civilisations* by L. Halphen and C. Sagnac, *Histoire du monde* by E. Cavaignac, are collective works produced by groups of specialists who have been entrusted with one or two volumes at most, and hence they are of high scientific value.

We have decided to adopt a similar method here. The present work differs from the general histories of the Church which have preceded it, first in its size, for it will consist of no less than twenty-four double volumes, but still more because it will not be the work of one single historian or of a few collaborators.

More than thirty writers from various parts of Europe have agreed to take part in its production. Whether they belong to the laity or to the clergy, secular or regular, whether they be professors at Universities or State schools, in Catholic faculties, in seminaries, or Universities outside France, they are all men of learning and competence: some have already produced works which do honour to French scholarship; others who are younger have shown on many occasions that they are quite worthy of our hopes, and that it would not be rash to confide to them, along with their elders, a task for which they are certainly well prepared.

Thus we have been able, as in the already mentioned general histories, to entrust the various periods of Church history to specialists possessing a deep personal knowledge of the matters in question, and very capable of drawing from the works of scholarship which have already appeared the conclusions which must be accepted, and also of filling up, if necessary, the gaps which still exist.

This History of the Church from its origins to our own time, which begins with the present volume, aims above all at bringing fully to the light the general results acquired by the various researches in ecclesiastical history during recent years, and to put them at the disposition of all those who for various reasons desire to attain them in a speedy and easy way.

It is intended more particularly for students who, for purposes of their studies, require certain knowledge drawn from the best sources; for general readers desirous of instruction or of enlighten-



ment, or to correct false statements; and lastly for workers of all kinds who, before specialising in the study of one subject, desire to envisage this in the framework of general history, in order not to go astray, and to avoid dangerous misinterpretations.

To all it will present an accurate statement, based on a critical knowledge of earlier works, or, where such do not exist, of the original sources, and it will, according to the case, be capable of satisfying all legitimate curiosity, or of giving direction for personal research.

From this general idea of the work there follow its distinctive characteristics.

Since it is a matter above all of initiation and of accurate statement, the various readers of this History of the Church should not only have at their disposition an accurate account of events, but should also be able constantly to refer to the works which have inspired it. Hence, besides the general bibliography at the end of the different volumes, each chapter will be preceded by a list of articles and works indispensable for anyone who wants to study more deeply the matters there treated. From these bibliographies we have deliberately eliminated works which are not altogether scientific in character, and retained exclusively those which may rightly be regarded as definitive, or at least as making an important contribution to the subject. Moreover, we have thus avoided recommending undeservedly those books and articles which so heavily encumber the literature of ecclesiastical history, and which for reasons which are not at all scientific, only too often give a wrong idea of the true character of the facts.

The text itself will be always accompanied by indispensable references. Original sources will be indicated wherever this seems necessary, but generally the reader will be referred to the most recent scientific works in which he will find these sources indicated. When dealing with questions which have given rise to diverse or contradictory opinions, we shall indicate briefly the reasons why one view has been adopted rather than another; at the same time, when the arguments in favour of the thesis enunciated have been set forth in a conclusive form in some book or article, we shall content ourselves with a reference to this. In every case, in one form or another, every affirmation, of whatsoever nature, will be justified, and the means of controlling it will be freely put at the disposition of all.

The same scientific preoccupations will inspire the utilisation of

the materials thus tested and presented to the reader. We shall endeavour to banish personal considerations which prove nothing, and to give a picture as exact and complete as possible of the different forms of ecclesiastical activity through the ages, leaving aside no essential aspect. The fault of some publications similar to the present one is the almost exclusive consideration of what we may call the *external* history of the Church, that is to say, of its relations with States and with organised societies. Without wishing to sacrifice this aspect, we think it would be regrettable to relegate to the background, as is too often done, the *internal* activity of Catholicism which has enabled it to radiate its light, and to spread its influence through all the spheres of the lives of nations as well as of individuals. Everything is interconnected in the life of the Church through the ages, and if we want to discover its deep significance, we must endeavour to grasp the bond which exists at all times between the dogmatic conceptions and canonical rules on the one hand, and the social, political and economic structure on the other.

Accordingly, no source of information will be neglected. At the present time, scholars who are dealing with the history of the Church are not content to utilise literary and diplomatic documents, but direct their investigations more and more towards theology, canon law, and works of controversy, in which can often be found the explanation of events and of the direction these have taken. General history should profit by this orientation: it will thus be able to view facts from the correct angle, to grasp their real causes, establish the relations which unite them to the theological or canonical conceptions of a particular epoch, and thereby give them a wide and exact interpretation.

We may be allowed to hope that in this way there will appear in its full light the extraordinary universality of the Church's influence through the ages. Need we add that in order to arrive at a more complete and more solidly established historical truth, those who are collaborating in this work have decided to fulfil all the requirements of modern methods? Thirty-five years ago, the Chanoine Cauchie wrote in the first number of the *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique*<sup>1</sup>: "Every Christian who is loyal to his faith accepts the government of the world by Providence, but this does not prevent him from studying scientifically the action of second causes." The distin-

<sup>1</sup> *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique*, Vol. I, 1900, p. 141.

guished Louvain professor in writing these lines was but echoing the desire often expressed by Pope Leo XIII, who wanted to see a universal Church History brought into line with the progress of modern critical research.

The present work has no object other than that set forth by the Pontiff who did so much for the development of historical studies. Aiming as it does at being really scientific and synthetic, dealing equally with all the periods and all the forms of ecclesiastical activity, we trust that it will, thanks to the collaboration of historians all inspired by the same ideal, realise the programme laid down, to the greatest possible satisfaction of all.



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# BOOK I

*The Church in the  
New Testament*

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# INTRODUCTION

## I. THE ROMAN WORLD AT THE COMMENCEMENT OF CHRISTIANITY<sup>1</sup>

### *Christianity Came from the East*

THE Catholic Church is often called the Roman Church, because its head resides in Rome, and because the great empire of which Rome was the origin and centre was, in the early ages of its history, the chief sphere of its expansion. Nevertheless the cradle of Christianity was in Palestine, whence it penetrated into Syria in the first place. Thus the starting point of the development of Christianity is to be found practically on what we might call the dividing line between the Roman Empire or the Mediterranean world and the East. Judaism provided the original soil of Christianity, and the Jews of the Dispersion, the *Diaspora*, were found all the way from the Pillars of Hercules to the ancient Eastern boundaries of what had once been the empire of Alexander the Great.<sup>2</sup>

While Rome, and above all Alexandria, had become great Jewish centres by the end of the period of antiquity, Babylon was another centre, or at least it had been, so that the fact that Christianity was preached first of all in the synagogues of the Jewish colonies scattered throughout the world has even led some to suggest, though with little likelihood, that the "Babylon" of the First Epistle of Peter, so obviously a symbol, in our opinion, may have been the

<sup>1</sup> Bibliography.—A description of the state of the Roman world at the end of the ancient era will be found in E. Albertini, *L'Empire romain* (Vol. IV in series *Peuples et civilisations, Histoire générale*, published under the direction of L. Halphen and C. Sagnac, Paris, 1929). See especially ch. v and vi and bibliographies there given. On the conditions in which the first development of Christianity took place in the Roman Empire, see: Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake, *The Beginning of Christianity*, London, 1920-33, 5 vols.; G. Kittel, *Die Religionsgeschichte und das Urchristentum*, Gütersloh, 1932; E. Meyer, *Ursprung und Anfänge des Christentums*, Stuttgart and Berlin, 1921-23, 3 vols.; W. Classen, *Eintritt des Christentums in die Welt. Der Sieg des Christentums auf dem Hintergrunde der untergehenden antiken Kultur*, Gotha, 1930. Other works dealing with particular questions occurring in this Introduction will be mentioned in the notes.

<sup>2</sup> On the *Diaspora* and the numerical importance of the Jews at the beginning of our era, see below, p. 68. Cf. J. Juster, *Les Juifs dans l'Empire romain*, Vol. I, Paris, 1914.



actual city on the banks of the Euphrates, instead of Rome, the spiritual Babylon.

In any case, Christianity in the earliest times spread over the two slopes of the mountainous mass of Judaism which stretched from Antioch through Jerusalem to Alexandria. It is none the less true, and of great importance, that it spread in the two directions with a very unequal intensity, rapidity, and success. Thus, while there seems to be little doubt that there was an early evangelisation of Persia in the Apostolic age, the results either remained invisible, or were effaced for about two centuries.<sup>3</sup> It was quite otherwise with the evangelisation of the Roman Empire.

### *It Develops First Within the Framework of the Roman Empire*

The existence of a political frontier, the disparity between means of communication, and the unequal resistance of two distinct civilisations provide an easy explanation of this diversity of success. The contact which had already existed for a long time between Hellenism and Judaism, and the fact that Christianity very soon found defenders possessing at least some degree of Greek culture, account for the greater permeability of the Greco-Roman civilisation to the diffusion of Christianity. In addition, there were more facilities of communication between the Mediterranean world and Syria and Palestine than between the latter and the region of the Tigris and the Euphrates: on the one hand there was the sea, and the roads of Asia Minor, and on the other there was a desert to cross over or go round. Lastly, and this is perhaps the most important point, Palestine at the time of Our Lord was already part of the Empire, and the first preachers of the Gospel, the Apostles and other disciples, were Roman subjects. The first Christian teaching started out from a land already Roman, spread to the Roman Empire, and quite naturally tended at first to develop within the Empire rather than beyond it.

### *It Became Organised as a Religion of Cities*

Thus, each great city visited by the first messengers of the Gospel which produced even a small number of converts became the seat of a Christian congregation which was called a church, ἐκκλησία. In this way Christianity manifested itself from the first as a religion

<sup>3</sup> C. J. Labourt, *Le christianisme dans l'Empire perse*, Paris, 1904, pp. 16-17. See Bk. II.

of cities<sup>4</sup> which adapted itself fairly closely in its external organisation to the imperial framework.

Being a city religion, its organisation developed and progressed along the same lines. Generally there was a distinct church corresponding to one city, and its head, the bishop, resided there, *chorepiscopi*, or country bishops, being sometimes found presiding over the rural congregations connected with the city. Later on, the city churches were themselves graded following the provincial organisation according to which simple cities were subject to the provincial metropolises, and these in turn were later on subordinated, at least in the East, to the higher metropolises, the chief towns of civil "dioceses" formed in the later Empire, exarchates or primacies, and later on still, patriarchates, Rome, the capital of the Empire, being the central and supreme see.

But there will never be an absolutely strict correspondence here, and the historical origin of a particular ecclesiastical condition is not always or only to be explained by its correspondence with a particular political situation. The religious supremacy of Rome is explained to a certain extent by its political supremacy, but its starting point is to be found in the arrival of St. Peter in Rome. Similarly, the dignity of various great Eastern sees such as Alexandria, Antioch, or Ephesus, though finally consolidated through their administrative status, had its origin in foundations which were apostolic, or were regarded as such. At the same time, these foundations were themselves to a certain extent connected with the political functions of the cities in question. Why did the first preachers of Christianity fix their dwelling places provisionally or definitely at Antioch, Ephesus or Alexandria, and St. Peter fix his see at Rome, if not because of the importance of these great cities, and in the case of Rome, because of its position as the capital city? Whatever may have been the prestige Jerusalem still enjoyed, Rome was bound to become the head, and to attract the first governors of a spiritual society which already before St. Peter's death had spread through a great part of the Empire. In other words, though the Church was not confined to the Imperial framework, and did not slavishly adopt its boundaries, it was nevertheless Roman from the first. In other words, the Roman Empire was, to use a phrase of Mgr. Duchesne's, the "fatherland of Christianity."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> P. Batiffol, *Primitive Catholicism*, p. 33.

<sup>5</sup> L. Duchesne, *Histoire Ancienne de l'Eglise*, Vol. I, Paris, 1906, ch. i.

*The Organisation of the Roman Empire*

The organisation of the Empire, then, explains in a great measure the organisation of the Church. Although based upon conquest, which destroyed the independence of many conquered states—great kingdoms such as Macedonia or Egypt, quarrelsome tribes or cities, such as the Gauls or the cities of Greece—the Empire rested essentially on the maintenance or institution of a civic or municipal life, over which there was a central power which was almighty and unlimited in theory, but which tempered its action in practice in such a way as to leave the old or newly founded cities to conduct their own affairs. A civilisation mainly urban, local autonomy, and a supreme absolute power: such are the general characteristics of the Empire.

But the central power did not control directly the hundreds of cities, great or small, comprised in the Empire: between these and the centre there was interposed the regional administrative machine, the name of which became synonymous with that of a land subject to Rome, i.e. the "province." The governor of the province, whether called proconsul, legate of Augustus, prefect or procurator, was its real ruler under the sovereign control of the Emperor. But he did not possess an authority which could not be contested effectively in the details of local life.

*Ethnical Elements*

As local life thus remained almost autonomous, and as there were in addition vigorous ethnic tendencies operating,<sup>6</sup> we find more or less strong and consistent national or regional elements existing within the apparent uniformity of the provincial organisation. Gaul, Spain, Africa, or Greece (officially named Achaia) were not mere administrative terms. On the other hand, while the use of the old native tongues such as Celtic or Punic persisted with varying success in different countries, amongst the upper classes of the population in the West, Latin was constantly gaining ground. In this way there gradually came about a profound transformation in the domain of languages. In the end, there were only two languages which mattered: Latin, and Greek. At first the Church used prac-

<sup>6</sup> On these ethnical survivals, see S. Gsell, *Histoire ancienne de l'Afrique du Nord*, Vol. IV, p. 498, Paris, 1920.

tically only these two languages, at least inside the Roman boundaries, in its liturgy and its communications between its various communities. And of these two, the Greek language preponderated, because of the national origin of the first groups of the faithful.

### *Oriental Colonies*

This survival of particular differences, even within an ever increasing uniformity, showed itself again in the Roman Empire by a social characteristic which manifests the former, and yet is also linked up with the latter: the development in numerous places in the Roman world, and especially in the great cities and maritime ports like Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, Carthage, Lyons, Aquileia and Salona, to name only a few, of ethnic "colonies"<sup>7</sup> originating from lands often far away. The members of these were closely linked together. Thus the Greeks of Alexandria, the Egyptians in Rome and Salona, the Syrians in Rome, Marseilles or Carthage, and the Asiatics of Lyons, for instance, are proofs at once of the mingling of populations within the bosom of the Empire, and of their instinctive resistance to complete fusion.

These colonies, oriental for the most part, played a great part in the religious evolution of the Roman world, and it was largely through them that were propagated the religions from Asia or Egypt which either prepared the way for Christianity, or else constituted so many obstacles to its later progress.<sup>8</sup>

### *Religious Aspect: Unification of Worship*

Again, the religious evolution of the Roman Empire was inevitably bound up with its political and social history. The tendency towards unification was manifested in the adoption of the Roman

<sup>7</sup> On these colonies, and the part they played in the Roman world, see L. Bréhier, *Les colonies d'Orientaux en Occident au commencement du moyen âge*, in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, XII, 1903, pp. 1-39; F. Cumont, *Une dédicace de Doura Europos, colonie romaine*, in *Syria*, V, 1924, p. 345; *Les Syriens en Espagne et les Adonis à Séville*, in *Syria*, VIII, 1927, pp. 330 et seq.; H. Leclercq, *Colonies d'Orientaux en Occident*, in *Dictionnaire d'histoire et d'archéologie chrétiennes*, col. 2272; L. Bréhier and P. Batiffol, *Les survivances du culte impérial romain*, Paris, 1920; G. La Piana, *The Foreign Groups in Rome*, Cambridge, 1927.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. F. Cumont, *Les religions orientales dans le paganisme romain*, 4th edn., Paris, 1929.

deities by all the provinces. What city did not worship the Capitoline triad? The most popular sanctuary in Roman Gaul was consecrated to Mercury, and there were innumerable African dedications to Saturn. At the same time, underneath the names of the deities of the Greco-Roman Pantheon, local cults carried on the ancient worship. The Saturn of Carthage and of Cirta hid the old Punic Baal, and similarly the Mercury of the Auvergne Mountains concealed the Celtic Teutates.

### *Survival of the Ancient Local Cults*

Even this opposition does not exhaust the complexity of the religious phenomena which we find during the first two centuries of the Roman Empire. At first, we find with Augustus an imperial attempt to bring about amongst the citizens of Rome a return to tradition, to the old beliefs, and the old morals. Though this did not meet with immediate obedience—that would have been impossible—the effects, aided by the progress of the Stoic philosophy, were felt in the following century. The second century was more moral and more religious than the first.

Apart from a return, more conventional perhaps than profound, to the old traditions, the manifestations of religious life in the same period take two different directions. Some, and those the most visible, but also the most superficial, are religious only in appearance, and merely constitute the most characteristic form of political loyalty. Such is the case with the cult of Rome and of Augustus, spontaneously begun by Eastern peoples accustomed for centuries to king worship, and imposed by the will of the prince upon Western countries without the least resistance, but rather the contrary.

This took almost everywhere a similar form, that of religious ceremonies during the provincial meeting, usually annual, of delegates from the civic aristocracies, under the presidency of a member promoted to the dignity of *sacerdos* of Rome and Augustus. Nothing shows better than the rites of this new official religion practised throughout the Empire the docility and even devotion to Rome and the Emperor on the part of subjected and externally unified peoples.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Cf. P. Guiraud, *Les assemblées provinciales dans l'Empire romain*, Paris, 1887; E. Beurlier, *Le culte impérial, son histoire et son organisation depuis Auguste jusqu'à Justinien*, Paris, 1891; L. R. Taylor, *The Divinity of the Roman Emperor*, Middleton Co., 1931.

*Penetration of Oriental Cults into the Roman Empire*

More profound was the movement which began in the first century though it became of much importance only in the second, and which inclined a growing part of the population of the Empire towards the religions emanating from the East, such as those of the Phrygian Great Mother, the Egyptian Isis, the Syrian Baals, or the Persian god Mithra. These religions made converts in ever increasing numbers amongst the various classes of society. They were open to all, and the slave might rub shoulders with his master during the sacred rites. It is none the less true that their spread tended to be confined by preference to some particular categories of followers, as also to certain parts of the territory of the Empire. Thus, the cult of Mithra, which excluded women,<sup>10</sup> at any rate from its hierarchy, recruited a great number of its followers from the army, and for this same reason flourished in the frontier provinces that were strongly occupied, such as those of the Rhine and the Danube, while it had little success in Africa.<sup>11</sup>

These religions, the sensual practices of which constituted at once their chief attraction and their danger, went through various phases in their relations with the Roman authority. Sometimes they experienced its mistrust, and even its rigour, and at other times its toleration or even its favour. The Republic had introduced into Rome already in 204 B.C.<sup>12</sup> the *Magna Mater Deum* from Phrygia, while surrounding her worship with precautions, and subjecting it to a strict control. It remained for a long time somewhat suspect, while passing as an official cult, and it was only under Claudius that the worship of Attis, which comes so close to that of the *Magna Mater*, received a recognised place in the Empire.<sup>13</sup> The religion of Isis met with prohibition under Tiberius, then a return of favour under Caligula. Mithra and the Syrian Baals made their entry into the Empire, or at any rate attracted attention there only at a time when the Eastern deities, far from arousing the

<sup>10</sup> On this exclusion, cf. J. Zeiller, *Sur les cultes de Cybèle et de Mithra*, in *Revue archéologique*, 1928 (2), pp. 209-19.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. F. Cumont, *Les religions orientales dans le paganisme romain*, 4th edn., Paris, 1929; J. Toutain, *Les cultes païens dans l'Empire romain*, Paris, 1907, 1911, 1920, 3 vols.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. H. Graillot, *Le culte de Cybèle, Mère des dieux, à Rome et dans l'Empire romain*, Paris, 1912.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. J. Carcopino, *Attideia*, in *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire publiés par l'Ecole française de Rome*, XL, 1923, pp. 135-99 and 237-324.

mistrust of the government, found it quite ready to accept them. This was the era of syncretism, tending to unify all beliefs in one broad religion, and finding places for various deities which by a process of assimilation or by ingenious interpretation gradually approached each other and melted into one, until the old Greco-Roman polytheism became transformed into a monotheistic cult, generally solar in form, which, towards the beginning of the later Empire, won the support of at least a great part of cultivated society.

### *Temporary Persistence of the Ethnic Character of the Eastern Religions*

What is perhaps most important of all to notice here is that, suspect, tolerated or favoured, these various cults, Phrygian, Syrian, Egyptian or other, retained for a more or less long time in the Empire, and in any case until the second century, a very marked national character. Though destined eventually to be integrated into the great movement of syncretism which won over the higher classes of Roman society, they were at the beginning upheld above all by the local colonies consisting, in the great cities, of groups, usually of the middle or lower classes, of natives from the Eastern provinces or their descendants.

These local groups, which remained at first ethnically homogeneous, formed so many distinct religious units, independent of each other. No oriental religion—not even that of Mithra, the different communities of which possessed a certain solidarity,<sup>14</sup> was ever organised into a church. Their followers might salute each other by the title “brother,”<sup>15</sup> but the only bond which united them was their common belief, not their organisation. The only organisation the Roman State allowed was its own, and it provided for religions of foreign origin an administrative system under the control of one of its great religious colleges, that of the *Quinddecimviri sacris faciundis*.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Cf. F. Cumont, *Textes et monuments figurés relatifs aux mystères de Mithra*, Brussels, 1896-9, 2 vols, especially Vol. I, pp. 269-70.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 535. See also, for instance, the title “fratres carissimi” given to the worshippers of the Syrian Baal honoured in the Empire under the name of Jupiter Dolichenus, C.I.L., V, 406.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. G. La Piana, *The Foreign Groups in Rome*, pp. 330-40.

*Judaism in the Roman Empire*

But was there not one religion from the East which existed in the Empire under a different régime? Certain it is that the Jewish religion enjoyed throughout, in consequence of old agreements between Rome and the Jewish nation, a special toleration, and a particular status.

In the next section, which deals with the Jewish world at the time of Christ, we shall discuss in greater detail the situation of the Jews of the Dispersion in the Empire. Let it suffice here to say that the treaties concluded in former times gave to the Jews the right freely to practise their religion, although this latter forbade its members to perform acts such as those of the Imperial worship, the omission of which was punished by Roman Law once their performance had become obligatory. Judaism thus enjoyed a very real privilege. Doubtless some measures of control, natural in the case of an awkward race and one which was from some points of view undesirable, reminded the Jews from time to time that their religion was still only tolerated. But on the whole their situation was a favourable one.<sup>17</sup>

Privileged by reason of their situation in the Empire, did these Jewish communities, which were religious as well as ethnical, possess also an organisation which distinguished them from the other Oriental groups? It has been suggested that in the towns in which they were installed, the Jews possessed synagogues, comparable to Christian parish churches, meeting places for a particular portion of territory, and that these did not constitute so many distinct colleges: <sup>18</sup> the group of synagogues in one and the same town would constitute the whole synagogue, or Jewry, or again, to use the juridical language of Rome, the *corpus* or *universitas* <sup>19</sup> of the Jews of that town,<sup>20</sup> and the totality of the synagogues of the Diaspora

<sup>17</sup> Cf. E. Schuerer, *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes im Zeitalter Jesu Christi*, 4th edn. (Leipzig, 1907-9, 3 vols. and Index, 1911), Vol. I, pp. 391-406, and J. Juster, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 179-242.

<sup>18</sup> G. La Piana, *La successione episcopale in Roma e gli albori del primato*, Rome, 1922. This is also the thesis of Juster, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 420-5.

<sup>19</sup> The *universitas* of the Jews of Antioch is mentioned in an edict of Caracalla in A.D. 213.

<sup>20</sup> On the Jewries in Rome, see G. La Piana, *Foreign Groups in Rome*, p. 350, n. 20; Juster, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 432; J.-B. Frey, *Les communautés juives à Rome aux premiers temps de l'Eglise*, in *Recherches de science religieuse*, XX, 1930, pp. 269-97.



would be subject to the supreme authority which governed the whole Jewish world from the religious point of view, Sanhedrin or Patriarch. In such a case the analogy with what we find later on in the Christian Church would be striking, though not such as to obliterate important differences.

But in point of fact, the central organisation of the Jewry of a city such as Rome has not been proved with certitude, and the real obedience of the whole Jewish world to the Patriarch of Palestine, who incidentally did not exist before the second century, and who always had a rival in the exilarch of Babylon, is equally unproven. Even if the existence of this kind of a Jewish "Church" were proved, it would remain true on the one hand that the government of the Jewish communities rested in the hands of temporal authorities and that the clergy had no directing power, such as the Christian clergy possessed in the Church,<sup>21</sup> and on the other hand, that while for Christians there was "neither Jew nor Greek,"<sup>22</sup> the religious unity of the Jews coincided with a very marked national unity.

Nevertheless, the religion of this particular and independent nation was addicted to making proselytes. It received and even attracted followers outside the Jewish race, "proselytes of the gate," provided these consented to accept the faith of Israel, and "proselytes of justice," i.e. assimilated to true Jews, if they submitted also to the rite of initiation, circumcision.

### *The Philosophical Schools and their Varied Success*

More free from national attachments, and as universal in their programme for human reform, if not in their actual propaganda, which reached the circles of a cultivated aristocracy rather than the common people, whom speakers nevertheless endeavoured to reach, the schools of philosophy offered to men's minds a way of rising above the ephemeral contingencies of earthly life and of achieving union with the Godhead.

It was Stoicism which, in the beginnings of the Empire, became more and more fashionable. But its teaching was not very consoling: it merely taught men to accept universal necessity, and set

<sup>21</sup> J.-B. Frey, *op. cit.*, 2nd article, in *Recherches de science religieuse*, XXI, 1931, pp. 129-68, containing a very close criticism of the theories of Juster and La Piana.

<sup>22</sup> *Galatians*, iii, 28.

before them no participation in the divine life other than submission to fate, and did not give them any hope of a personal immortality.

The Alexandrine philosophy of Philo, with its conception of ecstasy, which will reappear in neo-Platonism, corresponds much more to the aspiration of the soul which desires to free itself from the conditions of the present life and to attain to God, but being a kind of synthesis of Hellenism and Judaism, the Alexandrine system of Philo belongs to religion as well as to philosophy.<sup>23</sup>

The same is true of a third teaching, the recent discoveries concerning which, and the fine works written thereon,<sup>24</sup> have only recently revealed its influence at the dawn of the imperial age, in circles which were doubtless fairly restricted, but which comprised some of the best sections of the social and intellectual élite of the time. We speak of neo-Pythagoreanism.

The hazardous thesis which has attempted to connect Christianity with neo-Pythagoreanism, by regarding the Gospels as mere imitations of the shadowy biography of Pythagoras,<sup>25</sup> has not won much acceptance, but nevertheless the temporary and relative importance of the renaissance of Pythagoreanism, modified by a Platonist influence, is quite certain. A contemporary of Cicero, Nigidius Figulus, has left an account of the doctrine as it was taught in his time.<sup>26</sup> The Fourth Eclogue of Virgil and some passages of Ovid<sup>27</sup> bear witness at least to the character of the support it won; a Roman inscription on the other hand leads one to suspect a certain penetration into humbler circles,<sup>28</sup> and the famous basilica of the Porta Major in Rome shows that neo-Pythagoreanism was something more than a school: it was also a church. But this church, free as it apparently was from the impurity of the more or less sensual religions of the East, alarmed the

<sup>23</sup> On Philo, see below, p. 55 *et seq.*

<sup>24</sup> See amongst others: J. Carcopino, *La basilique pythagoricienne de la Porte Majeure*, Paris, 1927; *Virgile et le mystère de la IV<sup>e</sup> Eclogue*, Paris, 1930.

<sup>25</sup> I. Levy, *La légende de Pythagore de Grèce en Palestine*, in *Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes, Sciences historiques et philologiques*, fasc. 250, Paris, 1927.

<sup>26</sup> E. Swoboda, Vienne, 1889.

<sup>27</sup> On the Fourth Eclogue, see above, n. 24. On Ovid, cf. J. Carcopino, *Archéologie et philologie*, in *Revue des études latines*, V, 1927, pp. 146-9.

<sup>28</sup> Inscription of a *societas cantorum graecorum* found in the Porta Major and published by R. Paribeni, *Raccolta di Scritti in onore di Giacomo Lumbroso*, Milan, 1925, pp. 287-92.

civil powers because of its thaumaturgy, and its secrecy annoyed the common people. It met with persecution at Rome from Augustus to Claudius, and perhaps hardly survived there, although the partly legendary account of Apollonius of Tyana,<sup>29</sup> whom Nero expelled from Rome, shows that it retained some disciples for some time. In any case, being a scholarly and ultimately an aristocratic religion, it could hardly hope to conquer the masses, without developing quite openly into theurgy, as neo-Platonism did later on.

### *Persistence of Religious Aspirations*

The progress of the Stoic ethic and of neo-Platonist speculation doubtless had their influence on religious conceptions, but they never reduced religion to a mere morality or to a pure philosophy—far from it. The chances of success were on the side of the religions which appealed more to the senses: hence the growing influence of the Eastern cults, with their mysteries, which had been preceded on Greek soil by those of Eleusis and Orphism, to which, moreover, the neo-Pythagorean teaching was more or less related. They promised salvation to their initiates by means of trials and ritual purifications, without the accompanying obligation of a stricter morality.<sup>30</sup>

At the same time, at the beginning of the first century the great popularity of the mysteries had hardly begun in the Roman Empire. But on all sides we find aspirations, confused perhaps but convergent, to which Christianity was to bring a definite response. This response would not only give to those who adopt it the satisfaction of their soul's desires and a better rule for their individual life: there is no religion which has not also its social side. From the first, Christianity presents itself as a Church, a Society, and there is no society without organisation. That of the Christian Church can be satisfactorily explained only by a positive institution. For this organisation, at once necessary and intended, the Roman Empire, in which it rose and through which it spread during four centuries, provided a framework both solid and varied, and at that time still supple; and this framework had to be explained here before we begin the history of the propagation of Christianity.

<sup>29</sup> His life, or rather the uncritical romance which claims to narrate it, was written by Philostratus about A.D. 200 at the request of the Empress of Syrian origin, Julia Domna.

<sup>30</sup> See also on this subject, M. Rostovtzeff, *Mystic Italy*, New York, 1927.

II. THE WORLD OF JEWRY<sup>1</sup>

"Salvation comes from the Jews" (John iv, 22). Hence Judaism, the source of Christianity, must be studied here with particular care. We do not, of course, intend to trace out here the whole of Jewish history, but it is indispensable for us to know the nation in which Jesus was born, from which He chose His apostles, and in the midst of which He preached the Gospel.

At the time of Jesus Christ, the Jewish people was no longer wholly found in the land which God had allotted to them, the land of Israel: many of its sons were dispersed throughout the world. Jesus did not Himself carry the Gospel to these Jews of the Dispersion, nor to the Pagans; but His apostles on their journeys found everywhere their racial brethren who should have been the first disciples of the Messias. In point of fact, the Church found amongst them a few disciples, but also many enemies. In order to understand the support which the Church found, and the opposition it had to encounter, we must briefly describe the Judaism of the Dispersion, after a first glance at Palestinian Judaism.

## § I. PALESTINIAN JUDAISM

Luke, the evangelist, in order to fix the date of the beginning of the ministry of St. John the Baptist, writes: "It was the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberias Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, Philip his brother tetrarch of Iturea and the country of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of

<sup>1</sup> General Bibliography.—E. Schuerer, *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes im Zeitalter Jesu Christi*, 4th edn., Leipzig, 1901-9, 3 vols.; J. Felten, *Neutestamentliche Zeitgeschichte*, 2nd edn., Regensburg, 1925, 2 vols. (the study of Judaism fills the first volume and pp. 3-271 of the second); J. Juster, *Les Juifs dans l'Empire romain*, Paris, 1914, 2 vols.; Wilhelm Bousset, *Die Religion des Judentums im späthellenistischen Zeitalter. in dritter, verbesserter Auflage herausgegeben von Hugo Gressmann*, Tübingen, 1926; M. J. Lagrange, *Le Judaïsme avant Jésus-Christ*, Paris, 1931; J. Bonsirven, *Le judaïsme palestinien au temps de J.-C.*, Paris, 1935, 2 vols.; E. Meyer, *Ursprung und Anfänge des Christentums*, Stuttgart, 1921-3, 3 vols. (Judaism is studied in the second volume). This bibliography and those which follow contain only the most important references; others will be given in notes. The Works of Josephus are quoted according to the edition by Naber, Leipzig, 1888-96; the translation is based upon that of Theodore Reinach. The works of Philo are quoted from the edition Cohn-Wendland-Reiter, Berlin, 1896-1915.

Abilina, under the high priests Annas and Caiphas." These few lines already give us an idea of what Judea was at that time, subject to the domination of many rulers who made claims to its government. The Roman power, the most recently established of all, was sovereign; the descendants of Herod still possessed some portion of the authority which the Idumean king had bequeathed to them; below these, but closer to the people, the high priests enjoyed the prestige of a priesthood which the Jews revered even when it was in unworthy hands.

Just as the various rules, Roman, Herodian and Jewish, overlapped, so also the land of Judea was inhabited by different peoples which had occupied the country one after another, and had superimposed their civilisations and cults. Does not Palestine present the same appearance to-day? Under the British domination, which in some respects resembles the Roman Imperialism, we have the Mahometan Arabs, the Jews, and Christians, schismatic or in union with Rome, of various rites. To understand this mixture of races and religions, we must recall, at least briefly, the history of the half century which preceded the birth of the Saviour.

### *Palestine*

During many centuries, the Jews had lived their isolated life, which nevertheless had its greatness. The high plateau of Judea, where they were established, forms a rocky promontory to the south of Lebanon, and to the north of the Arabian Desert;<sup>2</sup> it descends towards the west by the rich plain of Sharon in the direction of the Mediterranean; to the East it is separated from the plateau of Moab by the deep depression of the Jordan; the Lake of Galilee, which the river enters to the north, is already more than 600 feet beneath the level of the Mediterranean; the Dead Sea into which it flows, about 55 miles to the south of the lake, is at a depth of 1,292 feet. The holy city of Jerusalem, built on a sharp rock, with Cedron at the east and Gehenna at the south dividing it from the surrounding mountains, towers over this land, now desolate but then covered with olives and vines. A short distance to the east we have the desert of Judea, which descends from plateau to plateau down to

<sup>2</sup> Cf. G. A. Smith, *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, 25th edn., London, 1931; G. Dalman, *Les itinéraires de Jesus*, trans. by J. Marty, Paris, 1930 (Engl. trans. *Sacred Sites and Ways*, London, S.P.C.K., 1935); R. Koepfel, *Palästina*, Tübingen, 1930; F. M. Abel, *Géographie de la Palestine*, Vol. I, Paris, 1933.

the Dead Sea, some nineteen miles away. To the west, in the direction of the coast, the hills are steep, furrowed with ravines and precipices, difficult to climb and easy to defend. It was there, at Modin, near Lydda, that under Antiochus Epiphanes in 167 B.C., a priest Mathathias had placed himself at the head of a national revival which put the Jews in conflict with the Greeks. The Seleucids, successors of Alexander, had extended the Syrian domination over all the East, deprived Judea of its political independence, and worse still, had disturbed its religious faith. Mathathias and his five sons fell one after the other; they left Judea not only free from the Syrian yoke, but more powerful than it had been since the exile; for a century it was governed by the Hasmoneans, kings and high priests, descendants of the first Machabees.

### *The Last of the Hasmoneans*

Sixty years before the birth of Christ, this last national dynasty fell, and with it Israel ceased to be independent. Then began the most tragic period in its history: carried away by an irresistible current, Judea was swept like a log into all the eddies of the Roman revolutions: the quarrels of Pompey and Cæsar, Brutus and the triumvirs, Antony and Augustus stained Palestine in turn with blood; the Parthians invaded it, and in the interior of the country, the most sacred authorities were overturned by foreigners, by Rome first and then by Herod.<sup>3</sup>

The invasion of Judea by Hellenism and then by the Roman Empire became irresistible under Herod, and it is this fact that gives to his brilliant and violent reign its real significance. Hence it is that historians pass such different judgments upon it: those who, like E. Meyer, view the spread of Hellenism with sympathy, acclaim Herod as its champion, and while not denying the violence of his passions or the hardness of his unscrupulous conscience, they like to regard him as one of the potentates of the time of the Diadochi or the Renaissance, a great politician, a redoubtable fighter and at the same time a protector of the arts and the promoter of a brilliant civilisation. On the other hand, the Jewish writers regard him as the scourge of Israel; they hate him not only because

<sup>3</sup> The reign of Herod does not belong to this history. Reference may be made to the following: M. J. Lagrange, *Le judaïsme*, pp. 164-202; W. Otto, article *Herodes* in Pauly-Wissowa, *Supplément* II, 1918, col. 1-158; Schuerer, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 360-418; E. Meyer, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 319-29.

of his Idumean origin, but above all because of the help he accepted from foreigners and gave to them in return; here their hatred is clear-sighted and deliberate.

It is certain that the reign of Herod was not without its brilliance; he restored to the Holy Land for a few years its unity and a semblance of independence; he decorated it with sumptuous buildings, and above all with a new temple at Jerusalem; but this brilliance was ephemeral; at the death of Herod<sup>4</sup> the country found itself ruined, more divided and more enslaved than ever.

It was towards the end of this reign of violence, "in the days of Herod the King," that Jesus was born.

Herod's last testament divided his territories between his sons Archelaus, Philip, Antipas, and his sister Salome.<sup>5</sup> Archelaus took over the government as soon as his father was dead. He endeavoured to win the people by reducing taxes and making promises; encouraged by these concessions the Jews decided to avenge the torture of the two doctors Judas and Matthias who had been burnt alive under Herod's orders a few days before his death; they demanded the dismissal of Herod's counsellors, and the deposition of the high priest; the pilgrims who came together in great numbers on the occasion of the Pasch joined in the rising; Archelaus sent against them a company of hoplites; the soldiers were greeted with showers of stones, and killed or wounded. Then the king called out his whole army: "the horsemen slew about three thousand men; the remainder fled into the surrounding hills" (Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, XVII, 19, 3). Such was, writes Nicholas of Damascus, the victory of the Greeks over the Jews.<sup>6</sup>

So bloody a repression in the Temple itself during the festival of the Pasch exasperated the Jews. They decided to ask for autonomy from Rome. Archelaus likewise hastened to Augustus, as did also the other princes of his family and representatives of the Greek

<sup>4</sup> In the month of Nisan (March-April), 4 B.C. The Christian chronology was fixed by Dionysius Exiguus in the Roman year 754, at least five years too late.

<sup>5</sup> To Antipas, to whom he had first of all left the crown, Herod gave the tetrarchies of Galilee and Perea; Archelaus obtained the kingship; Philip, brother of Archelaus, had Gaulonitis, Trachonitis, Batanea and Panias as tetrarchy; Jamnia, Azotus, and Phasaelis were attributed to Salome, Herod's sister, with 500,000 drachmas of silver coins" (Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, XVII, 8, 1, 188-9). Herod had put to death three other sons; also in the year 7, the two sons which he had had from Mariamne, herself put to death in 29. Five days before his death, Herod had his eldest son Antipater executed.

<sup>6</sup> Fragment 5 (*Fragmenta historicorum graecorum*, Didot, Vol. III, 353).

cities. The Jewish embassy comprised fifty members, and was supported by "more than eight thousand Jews in Rome." It was very violent in its accusations against Herod and his family, and ended by requesting "that the Jews might be delivered from kingly and the like forms of government, and might be added to Syria and put under the authority of legates" (*Antiquities of the Jews*, XVII, 314). Nicholas pleaded for Archelaus. Augustus settled the matter by awarding half the country to Archelaus, and the rest to the other sons of Herod; he named Archelaus ethnarch, promising to have him made king if he should show himself worthy of the title; his young brothers Philip and Antipas were named tetrarchs.<sup>7</sup>

### *The Revolt of the Jews*

Rome rather than the Herods! While the Jews of Jerusalem, supported by the Jews of Rome, were passionately requesting Augustus to give them Roman government, the whole of Palestine was rising against the Roman agents.<sup>8</sup> As soon as Archelaus had departed, the Jews of Jerusalem had revolted. Varus, legate of Syria, had subdued the rebellion, and departed, leaving one legion to maintain order. But Sabinus, whom the emperor had sent as temporary procurator until such time as the succession to Herod should be settled, showed himself to be violent and rapacious. "He made a bitter search after the royal treasure, using for this purpose not only the Roman soldiers, but also the slaves" (Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, II, ch. iii, 1). On Pentecost Day the Jews rose; a bloody fight took place in the Temple, the gates were burnt and the sacred treasury pillaged, Sabinus taking away four hundred talents as his own portion.

The revolt spread as a result of this catastrophe through the whole of Palestine. Galilee was led by Judas, son of Ezechias, an old opponent of Herod; Perea by Simon, once Herod's slave; and lastly in Judea a certain Athronges directed the struggle with his four brothers. All these leaders had themselves proclaimed kings by their followers.<sup>9</sup> To re-establish order, Varus had to return with his two legions; the Jews submitted, two thousand insurgents were crucified. All this took place during the early days of the life of Jesus. Galilee, where thirty years of His life were to be spent, suffered par-

<sup>7</sup> Nicholas, frag. 5, p. 354; Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, XVII, 317.

<sup>8</sup> *Antiquities of the Jews*, XVII, 10, 250-98; *Wars of the Jews*, II, 3-5, 39-79.

<sup>9</sup> Josephus, always careful to hide Messianic aspirations, says nothing of these here, but we recognize their influence in these ephemeral kingships.



ticularly in consequence of the rising of Judas and its repression by Varus: the town of Sepphoris, quite close to Nazareth and the capital of the province, was first seized and devastated by the insurgents (*Antiquities of the Jews*, XVII, 271), then retaken by the Romans, who set fire to it and sold all its inhabitants into slavery.<sup>10</sup>

The new city, rebuilt by Antipas, was magnificent, and Josephus describes it as "the ornament of all Galilee." But it was no longer a centre of Jewish nationalism as the town destroyed by Varus had been; it was now a Herodian and Roman city.<sup>11</sup>

This campaign of Varus remained in the memory of the Jews as one of the greatest catastrophes which had afflicted their nation, a disaster comparable to the invasion by Pompey or that of Vespasian.<sup>12</sup> When Jesus told His disciples that they had to carry their cross, they would understand this without difficulty, having still before their eyes the spectacle of the two thousand Jews crucified by Varus.

The reign of Archelaus, so tragically begun, lasted only ten years; Augustus had promised the royal crown to the ethnarch, "if he merited it by his virtue." Archelaus did not merit it, and did not get it. His government was arbitrary and brutal,<sup>13</sup> the Jews complained about it to the Emperor; Augustus summoned the ethnarch to Rome, heard his defence, then sent him as an exile to Vienne in Gaul, and confiscated his goods (*Antiquities of the Jews*, XVII, 344).

Such was the end, at any rate in Judea, of the Herodian régime. The Jews themselves had clamoured for its abolition, and many greeted this as a deliverance. It was about this time that an unknown Pharisee wrote the *Assumption of Moses*. After recalling the reign of the Hasmoneans, he continues:

"An insolent king shall succeed them, who will not belong to the race of priests; a bold and impudent man, who will govern his subjects

<sup>10</sup> *Antiquities of the Jews*, XVII, 289. Herod Antipas built up the city and fortified it once more; he dwelt there as in a capital city until the year A.D. 18. Cf. Dalman, *Orte und Wege*, p. 86; Schuerer, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 212 *et seq.*; Otto, col. 175.

<sup>11</sup> Schuerer, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 212.

<sup>12</sup> Josephus, *Contra Apion*, I, 7.

<sup>13</sup> "He deprived Joazar, son of Boethos, of the pontificate," and replaced him by Eleazar, in turn supplanted by Jesus, son of Sie (*Antiquities of the Jews*, XVII, 13, 1, 339-41).

as they deserve. And he shall cause their leaders to perish by the sword, and shall make them disappear so that one shall not know even the place of their bodies. He shall slay the old and the young, sparing none. He shall spread a great terror throughout all the land; he shall ill-treat them as the Egyptians ill-treated them, for thirty-four years. And he shall have children who will succeed him and reign for less time. Then shall come from the west cohorts and a mighty king who shall dominate them, and he shall make them captives, and shall burn a part of their temple, and crucify men all around their colony.”<sup>14</sup>

Behind the deliberate vagueness of this text we recognise without difficulty the reign of Herod and his children, then the Roman domination, the campaigns of Sabinus and Varus: all this is actual and real. What follows is imagined by the seer as a tragic era; the wicked flourish, the just are tormented, finally God appears, avenges His children, punishes the nations, and reigns.

God was indeed to appear; already the Son of God had been born and was now a growing child, but no one suspected it, and the writers of apocalypses continued to predict great catastrophes as the prelude to the reign of God.

### *The Procurators*

In place of the deposed ethnarch, Rome had entrusted the administration of Judea to a magistrate chosen from amongst the Roman knights. This “procurator” was nominated by the emperor, and depended upon him. The legate of Syria, whose territory adjoined, and whose authority was greater, occasionally intervened and took in hand the government of Judea, but these interventions were exceptional. The procurator fixed his usual residence at Cæsarea, but went up to Jerusalem at the time of the great festivals to keep order there.

This Roman administration had been asked for by the Jews, but it did not bring them the peace they desired. Certainly it delivered them from the Herods; the tyranny of the Idumeans was very great, and almost without remedy; Rome left the princes a fairly wide autonomy, and intervened in their government only for grave reasons. The Roman magistrates were more under control, their subjects could have recourse to Cæsar, and did not hesitate to do so;

<sup>14</sup> *Assumption of Moses*, 6. On this passage see notes by Charles in *Pseudepigrapha*, pp. 418 *et seq.*; and Lagrange, *Judaïsme*, p. 238.

the history of Pilate shows by more than one example that this appeal to Rome was a redoubtable menace;<sup>15</sup> the Jews, having powerful friends near the Emperor,<sup>16</sup> could make their complaints heard better than many other provincials. Nevertheless, Cæsar was far off; these appeals could not be made every day; in the ordinary course of affairs the Jews found themselves in presence of administrators less involved than Herod in their quarrels, but also more foreign to their traditions, and in consequence, more apt to hurt and wound their religious susceptibilities.

In the administration of the procurators, these incidents were not rare, and often involved brutality. Of these magistrates, the one who is by far the best known to us, and is most important for the history of Christianity, is Pontius Pilate;<sup>17</sup> the Gospel story makes him known to us, and the narratives of Josephus and Philo complete the Gospel data.<sup>18</sup> They reveal a magistrate who was suspicious, violent, always mistrustful of the Jews, and ready in case of alarm to harry and massacre. He had little understanding of his subjects and their religious scruples; he was suspicious, and not without reason, of their loyalty to Rome; in Palestine he felt himself in a hostile country, and regulated his conduct accordingly.

### *Herod Antipas*

Pilate had under his administration only Judea and Samaria; Herod Antipas governed Galilee and Perea; Philip, Iturea and

<sup>15</sup> We see this already in the accounts of the Passion of Christ (*John* xix, 12). A little later, in the affair of the votive shields, Pilate was effectively denounced to Tiberius and disavowed by the Emperor (Philo, *Leg. ad Caium*, XXXVIII, 299-305). Lastly, in A.D. 35, after the cruel punishment inflicted by him on the Samaritans, he was denounced to the Syrian Proconsul, Vitellius, who sent him to Rome (Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, XVIII, 4, 2, 88-9).

<sup>16</sup> The Jewish colony in Rome was large, and very devoted to the national interest. We have seen that against Archelaus, 8,000 Jews at Rome were joined to the fifty ambassadors. Sometimes, it is true, the Jews were out of favour. Such was the case under Caligula and also in the time of Sejanus under Tiberius, but these periods of disgrace were short and rare in the epoch we are studying.

<sup>17</sup> From the deposition of Archelaus to the coming of Agrippa there were seven procurators: Coponius (A.D. 6-9), Marcus Ambibulus (A.D. 9-12), Annius Rufus (A.D. 12-15), Valerius Gratus (A.D. 15-26), Pontius Pilatus (A.D. 26-36), Marcellus (A.D. 36-7), Marullus (A.D. 37-41). Cf. Schuerer, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 487 *et seq.*

<sup>18</sup> *Antiquities of the Jews*, XVIII, 3, 1-2, 55-62; *Wars of the Jews*, II, 9, 2-4, 169-77; *Antiquities of the Jews*, XVIII, 4, 1-2, 85-98; Philo, *De Leg. ad Caium*, XXXVIII, 299-305.

Trachonitis. Of these two latter princes, the first alone is directly connected with the history of Christianity;<sup>19</sup> this "fox," as Jesus called him (*Luke* xiii, 32), was able in the year A.D. 6 to avoid the disgrace into which Archelaus fell, and instead ingratiated himself into the favour of Tiberius. But he was sensual, drunken, brutal, and had all the vices of his father without his strength.<sup>20</sup> Herodias, his brother's wife, to whom he was united in an adulterous marriage, was the cause of all his downfall, as also of his greatest faults; she persuaded him to cast John the Baptist into prison, and later on to put him to death; she caused the tetrarch to repudiate his first wife, the daughter of Aretas, King of the Arabs, and this provoked a war in which Herod's army was cut to pieces (*Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XVIII, ch. v, 1). Lastly, it was Herodias who finally succeeded in persuading her husband to take a step which was fatal to him: Agrippa, brother to Herodias, and nephew of Antipas, had received from the Emperor Caligula the title of king, and Antipas himself was only a tetrarch. This was for the princess a humiliation which was insupportable; she insisted that Herod should go to Rome and ask Caligula for the royal crown. Herod resisted for a long time, but "it was impossible for him to escape from what his wife had decided"; he set out for Rome. He was followed there by emissaries from Agrippa; he was accused of having plotted against the emperor; was condemned, and deported to Lugdunum (Lyons) in Gaul<sup>21</sup> in the year 39.<sup>22</sup> Shortly after he died, having possibly been condemned to death by Caligula.<sup>23</sup> His tetrarchy was given to his nephew and enemy, Agrippa; for the last time, and for just a little while, the whole of Palestine was under one king. The history of the Apostles will give us occasion to recall this brilliant but ephemeral fortune of Agrippa.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Otto, *art. cit.*, col. 168-91.

<sup>20</sup> His vices appear clearly in the Gospel narrative: it suffices to recall his adulterous union with Herodias, the imprisonment and death of John the Baptist, the measures taken against Jesus, and lastly, the derisory judgment (*Luke* xxiii, 4-12). It would be easy to confirm this testimony by the narrative of Josephus.

<sup>21</sup> *Antiquities of the Jews*, XVIII, 7, 1-2, 240-56. According to *Wars of the Jews*, II, 183, Herod was exiled "to Spain." These two statements have been harmonised by the supposition that the Lugdunum here spoken of is Lugdunum Convenarum (St. Bertrand des Commings; Otto, *art. cit.*, col. 188). Reinach, note to *Wars of the Jews*, rejects this solution, abandons the text of *Wars of the Jews*, and gives Lyons as Herod's place of exile.

<sup>22</sup> On this date see Schuerer, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 448, n. 46.

<sup>23</sup> Dic Cassius, LIX, 8.

*The Jewish People*

The Roman procurators and the tetrarchs were the rulers in whose hands was the government of Palestine during the life of Jesus. For that reason we had here to recall their history, but they form only the remote framework for the events which are going to take place. Of far greater interest to us, because much nearer to Christ, are the Jews among whom He lived, teaching them, healing them, and converting, or, at least, leading them towards the little flock which was to become the Church.

What we have said about the government of Judea has given us some idea of the state of the Jewish people, subjected to foreign masters, striving to defend against these its nationality, and, above all, its religion. Of this resistance it might well be proud. The Jewish nation alone in the Roman and Hellenic world found in its religious faith sufficient strength to enable it to purify itself from the pagan elements introduced in the preceding century by the Seleucids, and to defend itself against the pagan influences which were made still more dangerous by the Herodian and Roman governments. True this resistance was carried to extremes, and religious fidelity too often degenerated into political revolt, but the nationalism of the zealots ought not to lead us to forget the religion of the Jewish people; we stress this because we see therein the proximate preparation for the Gospel.

*Hellenism and Judaism in Palestine*

This fidelity to God and the Law seems all the more remarkable if we consider the population of Palestine. This was never altogether homogeneous; at the time of Christ it was still less so. Pompey had freed the Hellenic towns and had transferred them to the province of Syria; Herod reconstituted the unity of Palestine for a time, but that was in order to favour Hellenism,<sup>24</sup> and still more in order to manifest his devotion to Cæsar, as is shown above all by the foundation of Cæsarea and the transformation of Samaria into Sebaste. In these two cities he erected magnificent temples in honour of Rome and Augustus; but he did not stop there:

“There was not any place of his kingdom fit for the purpose in

<sup>24</sup> “Herod was avowedly more favourable to the Greeks than to the Jews . . .” (*Antiquities of the Jews*, XIX, 7, 3, 29).

which he did not leave some mark of honour for Cæsar. When he had filled his own territory with temples, he poured out the like plentiful marks of his esteem in the whole province.”<sup>25</sup>

The movement begun by Herod was carried on by his successors; Philip founded a new Cæsarea; Antipas rebuilt Sepphoris and made it a pagan city; he founded Tiberias and Julias.

All these efforts bore their fruit: in a good number of towns<sup>26</sup> the Hellenic and pagan population was as strong as the Jewish, or even stronger. We see this in the riots which often broke out in the course of the first century between Jews and pagans; e.g. in A.D. 44 at Cæsarea and Sebaste, on the occasion of the death of Agrippa I;<sup>27</sup> in 58-60 at Cæsarea under the government of Felix;<sup>28</sup> and above all in 66, when the great revolt broke out; twenty thousand Jews were then massacred at Cæsarea. As a reprisal, the Jewish colonies destroyed or burnt the Greek cities of the Decapolis and the coast, but when their bands had disappeared the pagans recovered; “they killed those whom they caught in their cities. . . . All Syria was subject to terrible disorders; all the cities were divided into two camps, and the preservation of the one party was in the destruction of the other.”<sup>29</sup> We learn from this account of Josephus, not only the bitterness of the struggle, but also the respective strength of the opposing parties: the Jews, coming doubtless from Judea and Galilee, were able to invade and burn the towns of the Decapolis and the coast, but when these bands had passed on, the pagans regained the mastery and massacred the Jews.<sup>30</sup>

### *The Hellenic Penetration*

This bloody conflict brings out the rivalry between the two populations, and their strength. It also shows their zones of influence:

<sup>25</sup> *Wars of the Jews*, I, 21, 4, 407.

<sup>26</sup> On the Hellenistic cities of Palestine, the most complete study is that of Schuerer, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 94-222.

<sup>27</sup> *Antiquities of the Jews*, XIX, 9, 1, 354-9.

<sup>28</sup> *Wars of the Jews*, II, 13, 7, 266-7.

<sup>29</sup> The first riot, which was the cause of the war, broke out at Cæsarea, in the month of Artemisios (April-May) of the year 66 (*Wars of the Jews*, II, 14, 4-9, 284-308). The great massacre took place at Cæsarea on the 17th Gorpaios (August-September) 66 (*Wars of the Jews*, II, 18, 1, 457); the reprisals which followed are narrated *ibid.*, 458-80.

<sup>30</sup> At Scythopolis, the Jews had made common cause with the pagans. Nevertheless they were massacred by the latter to the number of 13,000. At Ascalon 2,500 Jews were killed, at Ptolemais 2,000. Elsewhere only the leaders were killed: the others were imprisoned, e.g., at Tyre, Hippo, Gadara.

Hellenism was concentrated mainly on the coast and in the eastern parts of Palestine, Transjordan and Eastern Galilee. On the coast, we find the Jews destroying or burning<sup>31</sup> Gaza, Anthedon, Ascalon, Cæsarea, Gaba and Ptolemais; in Transjordan, Philadelphia, Hesbon, Gerasa, Pella, Gadara, and Hippo; in Galilee, Scythopolis; in Samaria, Sebaste. The eastern cities belonged for the most part to the league of the "ten towns," the Decapolis.<sup>32</sup> This confederation was, it seems, constituted<sup>33</sup> just after the freeing of these cities by Pompey; realising that their new liberty was threatened by the Semitic population which surrounded them, these Hellenic towns had united together for mutual defense.<sup>34</sup> They dominated the commercial routes which spread out from Galilee at the east of the Jordan, to Damascus in the north, and in the south as far as Philadelphia (Ammân).

If after this glance at the Decapolis we recall what we said just now about the diffusion of paganism in Galilee under Antipas at Sepphoris, Tiberias and Julias, we realise that the Galilee in which Jesus grew up and later on preached was, almost as greatly as the Phœnician coast, invaded or at least permeated by Hellenism. And nevertheless, Jesus never preached in any of these new and splendid towns so close to him: Tiberias and Julias were on the edge of the lake; Sepphoris was five miles from Nazareth; Scythopolis nineteen miles. The Gospel does not mention these towns; it mentions the district of Cæsarea Philippi, but not the town itself. This reserve, evidently intentional, shows that Jesus up to the last confined His ministry to the Jews; He gave the same command to His Apostles: "Go ye not into the way of the Gentiles, and into the city of the Samaritans enter ye not" (*Matthew* x, 5). It was not until after the Resurrection that He said to them: "Going therefore, teach ye all nations" (*Matthew* xxviii, 19).

This fact, the penetration of Hellenism into Palestine, will also help us to understand the first circumstances of the ministry of the Apostles. They were Jews, but from birth they had rubbed

<sup>31</sup> As Reinach notes on this text, it seems that the Jews had really taken only Gaza and Anthedon; in the case of the other cities, they had burnt the surrounding villages.

<sup>32</sup> On the Decapolis, see G. A. Smith, *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, 25th edn., 1931, pp. 623-38.

<sup>33</sup> The title "Decapolis" first appears in the Gospels, Josephus, and Philo.

<sup>34</sup> The list of the ten towns in Pliny, *Natural History*, V, 16 (18), quoted by Smith, p. 629, comprises: Scythopolis, Pella, Dio, Gerasa, Philadelphia, Gadara, Raphana, Kanatha, Hippo, and Damascus.

shoulders with pagans; they fled from contact with them, but they knew them and must have understood their language. Of course, the fishermen from Galilee did not speak Greek like the poets or rhetoricians of the Greek cities, Philodemus or Meleager, who were the boast of Gadara, or Antiochus of Ascalon, who taught Cicero, but at least they must have known enough Greek to sell their fish to the inhabitants of Tiberias or Julias, and also sufficient to understand the orders of the Roman magistrates, as, for instance, the imperial decree made known to us recently by the Nazareth inscription.<sup>35</sup> And then, when the barriers fell down, and the vision at Joppa showed St. Peter that the way was open to the pagans, he found these first in Palestine, in the city of Cæsarea so often stained with the blood of the anti-Jewish riots.<sup>36</sup>

### *The Jewish Reaction*

These considerations will help us to understand the ministry of Christ and His Apostles, but already they throw light on the religious state of the Jewish people. In the past, in the times of the kings, the paganism of Egypt and Assyria constituted a great temptation. Under the Seleucids, and now under Herod and the Romans, this temptation had become much more pressing. Isolated in the Roman Empire which dominated it, and in the Hellenic world which threatened to absorb it, Judaism maintained itself in Palestine only by struggling against an invasion which was penetrating it from all sides. It had been almost expelled from the coast; it was held in check in the valley of the Jordan; and the mountainous massif in the centre of the country, in which it was entrenched, was being battered by the rising sea which surrounded it, penetrated it, filtered into it, and tended to break it up.

<sup>35</sup> This inscription was published for the first time by Cumont in *Revue historique*, CLXIII, 1930, pp. 241-66. It has often been studied; we shall have occasion to mention it later on.

<sup>36</sup> On the two languages, Aramaic and Greek, spoken in Judea in the time of Our Saviour, see G. Dalman, *Jesus-Jeschua*, Leipzig, 1922 (Engl. trans. by Levertoff: *Jesus-Jeshua: Studies in the Gospels*, London, S.P.C.K., 1929), especially pp. 1-6, and F. G. Kenyon, *The Two Languages of Palestine*, in *History of Christianity*, London, 1929, pp. 172-4. Dalman writes with reason: "He who knows the East is aware that familiarity with several languages is not necessarily proof of higher education, but is rather a state of things arising out of the conditions of intercourse between the different populations. He will not, therefore, have a different conception of the Palestine of the first century which was permeated with Hellenistic culture."



The whole strength of Judaism was being exerted to parry this threat: it drew itself closer together and isolated itself, and also the most healthy part of it attached itself more closely to God, His Law, and the promises.

To the Israelite, all the pagans were impure, and all contact with them was a stain. A symbolic dream three times repeated (*Acts* x, 10-16) was necessary to make Peter decide to go to the house of the centurion Cornelius and eat with him. When he presented himself to his host, he gave this explanation: "You know how abominable it is for a man that is a Jew, to keep company or to come unto one of another nation. But God hath shewed to me to call no man common or unclean" (*Acts* x, 28). A little while afterwards, when St. Peter went up to Jerusalem, he was questioned about his inexplicable conduct: "Why didst thou go into men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them?" (*Acts* xi, 3). He had once more to relate the vision which had enlightened him.

Outside Palestine also, the Jews held fast to this rule, even at the cost of grave inconveniences. Priests sent to Rome by the procurator Felix to plead their cause before Cæsar fed exclusively on figs and nuts, in order to avoid being made unclean by pagan food.<sup>37</sup> The holy books, moreover, gave them models to imitate: the three children at Babylon refused to eat anything that came from the royal table (*Daniel* i, 8).

In this land of Israel which pagans had invaded, and where there was in all parts the risk of being affected by contact with them, it was felt that the only method of defence was to surround the faithful with a hedge of precepts; the Pharisaic doctors, teachers of the people, did their best from generation to generation to make this hedge thicker and more prickly; <sup>38</sup> this jurisprudence very soon became so difficult not only to apply but even to know, that those who had not been initiated into it, the "common people," were always presumed to have violated it, and contact with them was likewise regarded as an impurity; this presumption created in those who regarded themselves as pure a haughty disdain: "this multitude, that knoweth not the Law" (*John* vii, 49); and the illiterate ones answered this disdain with hatred. Rabbi Akiba, who was one of the glories of second century Pharisaism, narrates that when

<sup>37</sup> Josephus, *Life*, 3.

<sup>38</sup> We need not here describe these endeavours by the Pharisees: they have often been studied, e.g. by Schuerer, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 560-6, and Billerbeck, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 695-702.

he was still outside this sect, he said: "If I had hold of one of these lettered folk, I would bite him as an ass bites, until I broke his bones."<sup>39</sup>

These conflicts, so painful to the conscience, must not be lost sight of by the historian of Christ and His Apostles. They help us to understand the preaching of Jesus, so patient, and so reserved when that was possible, but also, when necessary, so clear and decisive;<sup>40</sup> they enable one also to foresee the reception which such a preaching was bound to encounter: from the Pharisees, scandal (*Matthew* xv, 12); from the people, astonishment and admiration, sometimes also uneasiness; but lastly, from the most teachable and most faithful, the assurance that their Master had "the words of eternal life."<sup>41</sup>

### *Fidelity to God*

The horror of every stain only too often led to a morbid fear, and also a spirit of caste. But at least it defended Israel against all contagion of idolatry. "There arose none in our age, neither is there any of us to-day, tribe or kindred or family or city, which worship gods made with hands, as it was in the former days" (*Judith*, viii, 18). This intransigence was so strict that Herod had to reckon with it; his coins bore no image of man or animal, no emblem, in short, which might be suspected as idolatrous. True, he defied the popular faith in having a golden eagle erected on the pinnacle of the Temple. But some rabbis led a revolt; the eagle was beaten down; the rabbis were burnt alive, and the populace regarded them as martyrs. Pilate experienced a similar outburst of

<sup>39</sup> *Pesachim*, 49b.

<sup>40</sup> See especially *Mark* vii, 1-23.

<sup>41</sup> A Jewish writer has well understood that this deliverance from the yoke of the Pharisees led the people of Galilee to attach themselves to Christianity: ". . . Even the controversial methods of the Pharisees exasperated the 'common people.' While the Pharisees regarded the Sadducees as opponents who were their equals, they despised the 'common people' and regarded them as an inferior class. This isolation which cut off the learned from the simple people caused the latter to fall into a state of complete ignorance. . . . This separation helped greatly to strengthen the new sect of Christians. Amongst them the 'common people' found a loving welcome, while from the learned they encountered only the most brutal repulsion. Christianity did not uphold the requirements of the Pharisees of fidelity to the Law on the part of those who came to it, and it took much more account of the conditions of life of the Galilean population." (S. Bialoblotzki, in *Encyclopædia Judaica*, Vol. II, 1928, art. *Am ha-arez*, cols. 537-41.)

indignation and revolt because he allowed his soldiers to march into Jerusalem carrying pictures of the emperors: after a long resistance he had to give way, and the pictures were taken back from Jerusalem to Cæsarea.<sup>42</sup>

If the Israelite thus repudiated all idolatry, it was in order to devote all his strength to his God. Each day, at the commencement of his prayer, he repeated the verse of *Deuteronomy* (vi, 4): "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord." That was the mainspring of the Jewish faith, it is also the starting point of the Christian belief. A scribe asked Our Lord what was the greatest commandment. Jesus replied (*Mark* xii, 29): "Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one God. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind, and with thy whole strength. And the second commandment is: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is no other commandment greater than these." And the scribe said to him: "Well, Master, thou hast said in truth, that there is one God, and there is no other besides him. And that he should be loved with the whole heart, and with the whole understanding, and with the whole soul and with the whole strength; and to love one's neighbour is a greater thing than all holocausts and sacrifices." And Jesus seeing that he had answered wisely, said to him: "Thou are not far from the kingdom of God" (*Mark* xii, 28-34).

This short dialogue belongs to the last week in the life of Jesus. It took place in the Temple, in the midst of so many controversies which brought out the opposition between the Master and the Pharisees. At the very time of all those conflicts which were so soon to cause the death of Jesus and the ruin of His people, it is pleasing to see manifested here the deep agreement which, even then, was able to unite the truly religious Scribes with the Messias.

### *The Religion of the Poor*

And if we can find in a scribe this religion "in spirit and in truth," we shall find it still more easily amongst the poor and the humble who surrounded Jesus. There were still at this time Israelites such as Nathanael, "in whom there was no guile" (*John* i, 47); there were thousands of people who "hungered and thirsted after

<sup>42</sup> *Antiquities of the Jews*, XVIII, 3, 1, 55-9; *Wars of the Jews*, II, 9, 2-3, 169-74.

the word of God," who, in order to hear it, forgot to eat and drink, following Jesus into the desert without provisions. There were some who went further, and who, like the Apostles, abandoned all to follow the Master, or who, like Mary of Bethany, broke the box of alabaster to pour out the most precious perfumes upon His head. But as we shall see, those who during the lifetime of Jesus made a complete sacrifice for Him of all their possessions and of their life, were very few in number; in the case of the majority, the enthusiasm so keen at certain times, withered away quickly like the spring flowers on the rocks of Judea.

Why was it that these souls were so hard, and that the faith could not take deep root in them, but dried up and withered away? In many instances it was because of the care for earthly things; as in the case of the rich young man, to whom the Master addressed this severe sentence: "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God" (*Mark* x, 25). Again, we find the same thing amongst those invited to the feast: "I have bought a farm, and I must needs go out and see it; I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to try them; I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come" (*Luke* xiv, 16-20). Such things, says Our Lord, are thorns which choke the good seed. How can one observe the great commandment, and love God "with all one's strength," when the soul is absorbed in so many other cares? And how, again, can one love one's neighbour as oneself, if one is a fellow servant greedy for gain, or a pitiless creditor, towards whom God will in turn show himself pitiless? (*Matthew* xviii, 23-35).

### *Pride of Race*

The supreme danger lies in the pride of race which tends to pervert all religion. John the Baptist already warned his hearers in the desert: "Think not to say within yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father,' for I tell you that God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham" (*Matthew* iii, 9-10). Later on, when Jesus promised in the Temple to His followers that the truth should set them free, the Jews protested: "We are the seed of Abraham, and we have never been slaves to any man: how sayest thou, 'you shall be free'?" (*John* viii, 31-33). Similarly the Jews of Capharnaum quoted Moses against Jesus (*John* vi, 31 *et seq.*); the

Samaritan woman herself appealed to her "father Jacob." Could Jesus possibly be greater than he? (*John* iv, 12). In this woman the desire for the "living water" promised by Jesus was stronger than her pride, and she believed; but the Jews of Capharnaum and those in the Temple persisted in their opposition. The same pride was denounced by St. Paul in the unbelieving Jews: "Thou art called a Jew and retest in the Law, and makest thy boast of God, and knowest his will, and approvest the more profitable things, being instructed in the Law, art confident that thou thyself art a guide to the blind, a light of them that are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of infants, having the form of knowledge and of truth in the Law . . ." (*Romans* ii, 17-20).

Doubtless these prerogatives of Israel were real, but they belonged to them only as a talent which was meant to be used, while many of the Jews regarded them as a privilege of which they had the exclusive enjoyment. Thus Eleazar ben Azaria, interpreting a passage in *Deuteronomy* (xxvi, 7), puts these words in God's mouth: "Just as you recognise me as the sole God in the world, so I recognise you as the sole nation on the earth."<sup>43</sup> And Akiba, commenting on *Exodus* (xv, 2), represents all the peoples of the earth as disturbed by the praises with which Israel worships God, and saying: "Whither is thy Beloved gone? We wish to seek him with thee." But Israel answers them: "You have no part at all in him, but my Beloved belongs to me, and I to him."<sup>44</sup>

We must certainly recognise the passionate ardour of this religious faith, but we must also recognise the bitter jealousy to which it led, and which was so manifest in the whole history of Jesus and His Apostles. The patient condescension of the Master, confining during His lifetime His preaching to the children of Israel, did not succeed in dispelling their suspicions, or pacifying their anger. The prospect of the evangelisation of the pagans was enough to exasperate the people of Nazareth (*Luke* iv, 28 *et seq.*), and later on, those of Jerusalem (*Mark* xii, 1-12). The same anger burst out against St. Paul: they heard him quietly when he told them of his training by the Pharisees, and his conversion on the road to Damascus, but as soon as he narrated the vision which he had in the Temple, and the words of Jesus: "Go, for unto the Gentiles afar off will I send thee," the Jews cried out and demanded his death (*Acts* xxii, 22).

<sup>43</sup> Quoted by Bacher, *Die Agada der Tannaiten*, Vol. I, pt. ii, p. 226.

<sup>44</sup> Mekilta, on *Exodus* xv, 2 (tr. Winter-Wuensche, p. 122).

## *The Messianic Hope*

Above all, the Messianic hope was disfigured by this national pride and hatred of the foreigner. This disfigurement was the chief obstacle to the preaching of Jesus. At the same time, it would not be just to the Jewish faith to reduce all the Messianism of this period to dreams of national independence and of revenge against the pagans: political passions often disfigured religious faith, but did not stifle it entirely.<sup>45</sup>

Jewish fidelity to the Messianic hope must be stressed in the first place. The national independence had been destroyed; the bright hopes aroused by the coming of the Machabees had been extinguished with their family; the Jews nevertheless did not despair, they still waited for "he who is to come."

We find this expectation mirrored in every page of the Gospel: in the question put to John the Baptist by the priests and levites sent from Jerusalem, "Who art thou?" which drew the reply, "I am not the Messiah"; in the cry of joy when Andrew went to his brother Simon: "We have found the Messiah!"; in the faith of the Samaritan woman: "I know that the Messiah must come; when he comes, he will tell us all things" (*John* iv, 25); in the message of John the Baptist: "Art thou he who is to come, or look we for another?" (*Matthew* xi, 3).

Twenty-five or thirty years earlier, this Messianic hope inspired the rising of the Jews of Galilee, Perea, and Judea against Sabinus and Varus; an adventurer such as Judas, Simon, or Athronges had only to put himself at their head, and they rose up at once.

This "Messianism in action" reveals the warmth of the Messianic hope; it does not so well manifest its religious character; it is the literature of this epoch that best brings home to us the faith of the people.

## *The Servant of Jahveh, the Son of Man*

The reading of the Gospels shows us that the Jewish nation at the time of Christ thought of the Messiah as above all the Son of

<sup>45</sup> On Jewish Messianism at the beginning of the Christian era, see M. J. Lagrange, *Le messianisme chez les Juifs*, Paris, 1909; *Le judaïsme avant Jésus-Christ* (1931), pp. 363-87; L. de Grandmaison, *Jesus Christ*, Eng. tr., Vol. I, pp. 287-91, Vol. II, pp. 18-20; G. F. Moore, *Judaism*, 1927, Vol. II, pp. 323-76; J. Bonsirven, *Le judaïsme palestinien*, Vol. I, pp. 341-67.

David and the King of Israel; but when Jesus directed His hearers towards higher hopes, towards the Servant of Jahveh, towards the Son of Man, He was understood, though not always followed. The prophecy of Isaias (xl<sup>ii</sup>, 1-4) concerning the humble and gentle Messias, who "shall not break the bruised reed, and smoking flax he shall not quench," was constantly before the mind of Jesus; the text in *Daniel* (vii, 13) on "the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven" was quoted by Him before Caiphas when in answer to the High Priest He made His final claim.

This Son of Man, whom Daniel had contemplated, was never entirely forgotten by the Jews;<sup>46</sup> Jesus was able to recall Him to the mind of the Jews towards the end of His life, to bring out at once His humble nature, His redemptive suffering, and His glory. In the *Book of Enoch*, an apocalyptic compilation, the different parts of which were composed in the course of the first century B.C., the Son of Man appears in great majesty, surpassing all the holiness and greatness of those here below; He existed before the creation of the world, and dwells near to God; "he will be a staff for the just so that they may rest upon him and not fall; he will be the light of the peoples, and the hope of those who suffer in their hearts. All those who dwell on dry land will fall down and adore him; they will bless and glorify him, and sing to the Lord of spirits."<sup>47</sup>

### *The Son of David*

The *Psalms of Solomon*, written by Pharisees shortly after the capture of Jerusalem and the Temple by Pompey, do not, like the *Book of Enoch*, contemplate the Son of Man in heaven, near to God, but they await the Son of David, and they beseech God to send Him here below. *Psalm* xvii especially describes this royal figure.<sup>48</sup>

This beautiful canticle reveals to us the aspirations of the Jews towards a reign of justice and holiness. The royal son of David will be almighty, but this power will not come from His arms, it

<sup>46</sup> Nevertheless, it was understood only with difficulty: "We have heard out of the Law that Christ abideth for ever; and how sayest thou 'The Son of man must be lifted up'? Who is this Son of Man?" (*John* xii, 34).

<sup>47</sup> *Enoch* xl<sup>viii</sup>, 4-5. On the *Book of Enoch*, see Martin, *Le livre d'Enoch*, Paris 1906; R. H. Charles, *Enoch*, in *Pseudepigrapha*, Oxford, 1913, pp. 163-281.

<sup>48</sup> *Psalms of Solomon*, cf. Charles, *op. cit.*, pp. 625-52; Lagrange, *Judaisme*, pp. 149-63.

will be a purely spiritual power, having its source in the divine gifts which the Lord will bestow on Him. We see here an echo of the prophecy of Isaias, but a feeble one; the "mighty God" spoken of by the prophet no longer appears, but we have a just and holy king, a good shepherd. This passage reminds us that on the eve of the Christian era, amongst the Pharisees there were still Israelites who were not affected by the warlike temper of the zealots, and who desired for their Messias holiness above all things.

### *Triumphal Messianism*

At the same time, we must acknowledge that these religious aspirations towards the holiness of the Messianic Kingdom are less manifest in Jewish apocalypses than the dreams of victory, domination, and vengeance. For instance, the author of *The Assumption of Moses* thus announces the Kingdom of God:

" . . . He arises, the most high and only everlasting God, and he will appear to punish the nations, and he will destroy all their idols. Then shalt thou be happy, O Israel, and thou shalt mount upon the neck and the wings of the eagle, and they shall be spread out (to fly). And God will draw thee up, and place thee in the starry heaven, in the place where they dwell, and thou shalt look down from on high. And thou shalt see thy enemies on the earth, and thou shalt recognise them, and rejoice, and give thanks and worship to thy Creator."<sup>49</sup>

This book, we must repeat, was written in Palestine at the time when Our Lord was a child. The Jews of the Dispersion frequently expressed in the Sibylline books the same ardent hopes.<sup>50</sup> And even after the great catastrophe of A.D. 70, and the ruin of the city and the Temple, they looked for and sang of the triumph of the Messias over all his enemies. About the year 100 a Pharisee writing at Rome composed a series of visions on this theme. The sixth is the most majestic:

"And lo, a violent wind rose from the sea, so strong that it lifted up all the waves thereof. And lo, the wind caused to come up from the bosom of the sea as it were a man. And this man flew with the clouds

<sup>49</sup> *Assumption of Moses*, X, 7-10, cf. Lagrange, *Messianisme*, p. 86. These verses are taken from a canticle which forms ch. x of this apocalypse. Cf. Charles, *Pseudepigrapha*, pp. 421 *et seq.*

<sup>50</sup> E.g. in the great apocalypse in Book III, which dates about 140 B.C. (Schuerer, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 571 *et seq.*; Lagrange, *Judaïsme*, pp. 505-10.)



of heaven. And wherever he turned his face, all things trembled before his look. And wherever there was heard the sound of his mouth, all things melted as wax melts in the fire. And then lo, an immense multitude of men, that no man could number, assembled together from the four winds of heaven, to fight against the Man who had come up out of the sea. And lo, he graved out a great mountain, and flew up upon its summit. And I sought the place whence the mountain had been graven, and I could not find it.

"And then I beheld: all those who had gathered together to fight against him were troubled: and yet they continued their attack. But although he saw this great army coming to fight him, he lifted not up his hand, he took neither sword or any weapon. But I beheld, and lo, he sent forth from his mouth a flood of fire, from his lips a breath of fire, from his tongue a spark of fire, and all this mingled together, the wave of fire, the breath of fire, and the spark of fire, and it fell upon the multitude who were advancing to the attack, and it consumed them all, so that of that innumerable army there was seen nothing any more but a mass of ashes and of smoke. I saw and I awoke."<sup>51</sup>

This vision is very striking; this Man with a breath of fire is of a more than human greatness, but it is all very far from the Gospel. When we read these apocalypses, we understand the anxiety of the Pharisees who pressed upon Jesus and said to Him: "Show us a sign from heaven."

### *The Scandal of the Cross*

But what must have disconcerted them most of all was the Passion. The Cross was to the Jews a great stumbling block. We could run through all the Messianic chants, but nowhere shall we find the suffering and redeeming Messiah long ago foretold by Isaias.<sup>52</sup> These perspectives had become so foreign to the contemporaries of Jesus that although He multiplied on these points the clearest predictions, even His Apostles did not want to listen to them, and His Passion was for them a crushing blow.

This brings out the danger in the triumphal Messianism in which the Jews delighted; they could not recognise in the "humble

<sup>51</sup> *IV Esdras*, xiii, 2-11. (*IV Esdras* is known as *II Esdras* in non-Catholic works. Catholics give the names of *I* and *II Esdras* to the canonical books of the O.T. called "Ezra" and "Nehemiah" in Protestant versions.)

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Billerbeck, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 273-99, 363-70; L. de Grandmaison, *Jesus Christ*, Eng. tr., Vol. I, p. 291; Lagrange, *Judaisme*, p. 386; J. Bonsirven, *Le judaisme*, Vol. I, pp. 381-6.

and gentle Jesus" the one who was to come, and when, after His death, the Temple, the Holy City, and all Israel was overthrown, the scandal reached its culmination:

"Thou hast said that thou didst create the world for us, and thou hast said that the other nations coming from Adam were as nothing, that they were as spittle, or the froth that overflows a vessel. But now, O lord, these nations which are nothing, make slaves of us and devour us. And we, thy people, whom thou hast chosen, whom thou hast called thy first-born, thy only child, thy love, we are delivered into their hands. If it was for us that thou didst create the world, why do we not possess the world as our inheritance? How long are we to wait for it?"<sup>53</sup>

When Jesus appeared, this great catastrophe had not yet taken place, but already for some considerable time Israel had been greatly oppressed. The Jewish historian, Klausner, reviewing the century which elapsed from the fratricidal war of Hyrcanus and Aristobulus until the end of the government of Pilate and the reign of Herod Antipas (67 B.C. till A.D. 39) writes: "There was hardly a single year during this century which was not rendered bloody by wars, revolts, risings, riots; this state of things afflicted the land of Israel during the whole period which preceded Jesus, it lasted on during his lifetime." The same historian estimates that, if we wish to count the number of Israelites who fell in these wars or were executed by Herod or by the Romans, we shall arrive at a total of at least two hundred thousand men, a terrible figure for a country which had hardly more than a million inhabitants, and still more terrible if we remember that those who thus perished were the *élite* of the nation.<sup>54</sup> And while these executions decimated the people, spying harassed them. We may recall what Josephus says of King Herod, who disguised himself and mingled with groups of Jews to listen to what they were saying (*Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XV, 367). This reign of terror made such an impression that we still find traces of it in the Talmud.<sup>55</sup>

All these sufferings were a trial which, if accepted in the proper spirit, would have prepared Israel for the coming of the Messias. Such was, in fact, the preparation of the poor, the humble, and the

<sup>53</sup> *IV Esdras*, vi, 55-9.

<sup>54</sup> Klausner, *Jésus de Nazareth*, p. 242.

<sup>55</sup> We read that Herod disguised himself and sought out Baba ben Buta, and began to criticise the government, in order to lead him on, but Baba ben Buta was on his guard: "The birds in the heavens would repeat what one said."

afflicted whom Jesus pronounces blessed.<sup>56</sup> But those who did not know how to humble themselves under the hand of the Lord were crushed by suffering or revolts. It had been promised to Judah that all the nations would be subject to it, and Judah was dominated by the nations. The "riches of the nations" had been promised, and Pagan Rome imposed taxes and tributes upon it. It had been promised that kings would be its foster fathers, and Pompey came and conquered with his army. It had been said that pagans would bend down their foreheads to the ground and kiss the prints of their feet, and an insignificant Roman officer was the all-powerful master of Judea. To Israel had been promised the Messiah, the Son of David, and there came to them Herod the Idumean. This was indeed too much.<sup>57</sup>

This terrible trial would have been better borne if the people had possessed religious leaders worthy of their confidence, but at this time there were none such; the Israelites were as "sheep without a shepherd" (*Mark* vi, 34). There were indeed some who were in charge of the sheep, but these were hirelings or robbers (*John* x, 8 *et seq.*).

### *The Sadducees*

At the time of Christ, two great parties vied for religious supremacy: the Sadducees and the Pharisees.<sup>58</sup> We find them in turn opposing Him in the course of His ministry, and finally joining together to destroy Him. Later on, St. Paul, appearing before the Sanhedrin, in which Pharisees and Sadducees were represented, set them against one another.

This last incident shows us that the Sadducees and Pharisees both belonged to the Supreme Council of the nation, and confronted each other. The Sadducees belonged to the priestly and lay aristocracy;<sup>59</sup> the Scribes belonged for the most part<sup>60</sup> to the Phar-

<sup>56</sup> On this religious movement, see I. Loeb, *La littérature des pauvres dans la Bible*, Paris, 1892; A. Causse, *Les pauvres d'Israël*, Strassburg, 1922.

<sup>57</sup> Klausner, *op. cit.*, p. 246.

<sup>58</sup> On these two sects see Schuerer, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 447-88; Moore, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 56-71; Lagrange, *Judaïsme*, pp. 271-306; L. de Grandmaison, *Jesus Christ*, Eng. tr., Vol. I, pp. 266-75.

<sup>59</sup> The Sanhedrin was made up of three classes: the priests, the elders, and the scribes. The elders, who represented the lay aristocracy, belonged like the priests to the party of the Sadducees. Cf. J. Jeremias, *Jerusalem zur Zeit Jesu*, II Teil, 1 Lieferung, Leipzig, 1929, pp. 88-100.

<sup>60</sup> The leaders of the Pharisees were Scribes. But many Pharisees were not

isaic party. These two groups were distinguished by the social class to which they belonged, but still more by the religious tendencies they represented.

The Sadducees<sup>61</sup> were characterised above all by the exclusive importance which they attached to the written law, to the detriment of oral tradition;<sup>62</sup> they rejected the belief in the resurrection<sup>63</sup> and in the angels.<sup>64</sup> Josephus accuses them of behaving barbarously not only towards strangers, but also to each other.<sup>65</sup> In the administration of justice, this roughness went as far as cruelty.<sup>66</sup>

In the time of Christ, the Sadducees occupied a prominent position because of their social rank and the functions they exercised; they played a preponderating role in the trial of Jesus; they were entirely responsible for the first measures taken against the Apostles (Acts iv, 1), and later on for the death of James the Less (Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, XX, 200). But though their authority was great, their religious influence was weak: "they succeeded in convincing only the rich, and were not followed by the people" (*Antiquities of the Jews*, XIII, 298). Their doctrine was characterised only by negations; their contempt for tradition and even for their masters<sup>67</sup> isolated them; their pride alienated the people from them: "Their teaching is received but by a few, yet by those of the greatest

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Scribes, and conversely some Scribes were not Pharisees. Cf. Jeremias, *op. cit.*, p. 127. In the Gospel the Scribes and Pharisees usually appear together, either in the steps they take, or in the rebukes which Jesus addresses to them. But sometimes the two groups are distinguished: Luke xi, 39-44, and 46-52. Cf. our *Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ*, Eng. tr., Vol. II, p. 179, n. 2.

<sup>61</sup> By their name, the Sadducees are assimilated to sons of Sadoc, or priests, but, as we have said, they also included layfolk. We must add that in the first century the high priests belonged for the most part to the non-priestly families of Boethus, Hannas, and Phiabi. Cf. Jeremias, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-9.

<sup>62</sup> *Antiquities of the Jews*, XIII, 10, 6, 298; XVIII, 1, 4, 16.

<sup>63</sup> Mark xii, 18; Acts xxiii, 8; *Antiquities of the Jews*, XVIII, 1, 4, 16; *Wars of the Jews*, II, 8, 14, 166.

<sup>64</sup> Acts xxiii, 8.

<sup>65</sup> *Wars of the Jews*, II, 8, 14, 166.

<sup>66</sup> *Antiquities of the Jews*, XX, 9, 1, 199-200. We must be careful in reading these passages of Josephus: his exposition of the different doctrines is affected by the attempt to correlate them with Greek philosophy (the immortality of the soul is substituted for the resurrection of the body), and Josephus, very enthusiastic when speaking of the Essenes, and very benevolent with regard to the Pharisees (except when he copies Nicholas of Damascus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, XVII, 2, 4, 41), has no sympathy at all for the Sadducees.

<sup>67</sup> "Arguing against the masters of wisdom whom they follow is in their eyes a virtue" (*Antiquities of the Jews*, XVIII, 1, 4, 17).

dignity. They do almost nothing of themselves, so to speak, for when they become magistrates, as they are unwillingly and by force sometimes obliged to do,<sup>68</sup> they conform themselves to the propositions of the Pharisees, because the multitude would not otherwise bear with them" (*Antiquities of the Jews*, XVIII, 17). The Sadducees were influential less as a religious sect than as a caste; when the holy city was destroyed with the Temple, they lost their political authority, and with it all domination over the people.<sup>69</sup>

### *The Pharisees*

We have just seen that religious influence never belonged to the Sadducees; it was completely in the hands of the Pharisees. The testimony of Josephus is in this connection confirmed by the texts and narratives of the Gospel: "The scribes and the Pharisees have sitten on the chair of Moses. All things therefore whatsoever they shall say to you, observe and do, but according to their works do ye not" (*Matthew* xxiii, 2-3). The discourse of Jesus from which these words are taken is the most severe in the whole Gospel. It is a terrible indictment of the Scribes and the Pharisees, and nevertheless, even there Christ is careful to safeguard their authority. The Pharisees abuse it; these abuses must be condemned, but the yoke must not be entirely rejected, for that could not be done without rejecting the yoke of the Law. The chair in which the Pharisees sit is the chair of Moses. St. Paul speaks in the same way: when he reminds the Philippians of his very close attachment to Judaism he tells them he was "an Hebrew of the Hebrews; according to the law, a Pharisee" (*Philippians* iii, 5).

The Gospel history tells us how the Pharisees made their influence serve their hatred; thereby they lost themselves in losing the people: they became blind guides of the blind. But so long as this decay was not complete they were the doctors of the Law, and had a right to be respected.

This authority enjoyed by the Pharisees in the time of Jesus was not based on their birth, or on their functions. They were

<sup>68</sup> This repugnance of the Sadducees to become magistrates is to be noted.

<sup>69</sup> Hence to-day Jewish writers and those who agree with their positions are very careful of the reputation of the Pharisees, and not interested in that of the Sadducees. Pharisaism exists still to-day, and defends itself (their defence may be seen in R. T. Herford's *The Pharisees*, 1923; Herford is not a Jew). The Sadducees have disappeared and have left no trace.

recruited from all classes of the people; we find some among the priests,<sup>70</sup> many amongst the scribes, but many also amongst the simple people.<sup>71</sup> What made a Pharisee was the traditional teaching received from a master, to whom he had devoted his life, and which he would in turn bequeath to his own disciples. The Sadducee recognised only the written law; the Pharisee was above all faithful to the tradition of the elders, and regarded this as binding, as much as and even more than the letter of Scripture.

The doctrines which the Sadducees rejected and which the Pharisees on the contrary held were the existence of angels and the resurrection of the body. But it was above all to moral theology and casuistry that they devoted themselves. They called themselves and claimed to be the "saints." Their holiness consisted above all in a scrupulous conformity with the law; the Pharisees were especially careful in the observance of the Sabbath and of legal purity.<sup>72</sup>

### *Jesus and the Pharisees*

This scrupulous and devoted observance appears all through the Gospel story. Jesus cannot have been sent by God, for He does not keep the Sabbath (*John* ix, 16); His disciples break the Sabbath inasmuch as they pull a few ears of corn in passing, and this, for a Pharisee, was equivalent to working at the harvest, and was forbidden.<sup>73</sup> The paralytic at the pool of Bezatha broke the Sabbath by carrying his couch;<sup>74</sup> Jesus Himself infringed it in miraculously curing a sick man.<sup>75</sup> On the question of purity and impurity the

<sup>70</sup> E.g. the writer of the *Psalms of Solomon*.

<sup>71</sup> On the distinction between the Scribes and the Pharisees, see above, p. 60, n. 60.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. Lagrange, *op. cit.*, pp. 274-7.

<sup>73</sup> On the Sabbath Day "one may cut neither a branch nor a leaf, nor pluck fruit" (Philo, *Life of Moses*, II, 4). Cf. *Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ*, Vol. I, p. 105.

<sup>74</sup> *John* v, 10.

<sup>75</sup> *Mark* iii, 1-6; *Matthew* xii, 9-14. Jesus replies: "What man shall there be among you, that hath one sheep: and if the same fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not take hold on it and lift it up? How much better is a man than a sheep!" Some doctors at the time of Christ were still more severe than the Pharisees whom Jesus rebuked. We read in a Zadokite work: "If an animal fall into a pit or a ditch, it must not be taken out on the sabbath day." And again: "If a human being falls into the water . . . it is forbidden to get him out with the help of a ladder, a rope, or an instrument" (*Un écrit sadducéen*, tr. Israel Levi, in *Revue des études juives*, LXI, 1911, p. 198). Charles, in his note on this text (*Pseudepi-*

divergence was still deeper. "Why," asked the Pharisees, "do not thy disciples live according to the tradition of the elders? Why do they eat with unwashed hands?" And Jesus answers: "And why do you transgress the commandment of God for your tradition?" And calling the multitudes together, He said to them: "Hear ye and understand. Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but what cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man. If any man have ears to hear, let him hear."<sup>76</sup>

### *Dangers of Pharisaism*

"The rupture between Jesus and the Pharisees was complete." This statement of Professor Klausner<sup>77</sup> is true, but we must add that the rupture was a liberation for the disciples of Jesus. The aim of the Pharisees had been at the beginning legitimate and beneficial: in the land of Israel, invaded by so many foreigners, the Law could be observed only at the price of great vigilance; this fidelity had often been heroic, and under the Machabees it had had its martyrs. But the martyrs had been succeeded by the Scribes; to safeguard the Law they had multiplied around it the precautions of their jurisprudence, and in their anxiety to prepare for everything, to regulate everything, and to prescribe for all occasions, they had rendered the yoke of the Law so heavy that they themselves often avoided it: "They bind heavy and insupportable burdens, and lay them on men's shoulders, but with a finger of their own they will not move them" (*Matthew* xxiii, 4). And then, to make this burden tolerable, they indulged in quibbles which sacrificed religion to their meticulous requirements;<sup>78</sup> "they strained at a gnat and swallowed a camel."

Lastly, and this was one of the chief dangers of this sectarian

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*grapha*, p. 827, n. 23), compares *Shabbat*, 128*b*, citing R. Jehuda: "If an animal falls into a well, it may be fed there; one may also put things under him so that he can raise himself and get out of the well by his own efforts." Cf. *Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ*, Vol. I, p. 109.

<sup>76</sup> *Mark* vii, 1-23; *Matthew* xv, 1-20.

<sup>77</sup> Klausner, *op. cit.*, pp. 246.

<sup>78</sup> E.g. in the question of the corban, in which they made little of filial piety (*Mark* vii, 10-13. Cf. *Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ*, Vol. I, p. 327), and in the question of oaths: "Woe to you, blind guides, that say 'Whosoever shall swear by the Temple, it is nothing, but he that shall swear by the gold of the temple, is a debtor'" (*Matthew* xxiii, 16; *Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ*, Vol. I, p. 161).

formation, by this plethora of precautions, and this exaggeration of legal purity, the Pharisees isolated themselves. They were, as their name indicates, the "separated ones."<sup>79</sup> This danger was so manifest that historians who are especially sympathetic towards them<sup>80</sup> have recognised it. It is this separatism that Jesus denounced in the parable of the Pharisee and the publican: "O God, I give thee thanks that I am not as the rest of men," says the Pharisee (*Luke* xviii, 11).

In spite of these terrible faults, the Pharisees were regarded by the Jews as the men of the Law. Many of the Israelites desirous of holiness went to them. In a passage which seems to be taken from Nicholas of Damascus,<sup>81</sup> Josephus narrates that six thousand of them had refused the oath to the emperor and King Herod.

This figure of six thousand is very far from representing the total number of adherents of the sect; they were numerous, not only in Jerusalem, where dwelt the great doctors who were their leaders, but in all Palestine and even in the Diaspora.

It was likewise the Pharisees who organised the fight against Jesus, and later on against St. Paul. If the Jewish people as a whole rejected the Messiah, it was the Pharisees who were responsible.

<sup>79</sup> On this name, see Lagrange, *op. cit.*, p. 273 and n. 2. This appellation was given to the Pharisees and finally accepted by them. They preferred to call themselves the "holy ones" or "companions" (*Haberim*). The latter title, however, belonged only to those who had been regularly affiliated to the sect, not to its sympathisers.

<sup>80</sup> G. F. Moore, *Judaism*, Vol. II, p. 161, after condemning the lowering of moral values in this sectarian ethic, goes on: "Worse . . . is the self-complacency of the members of such a party or association and the self-righteousness that comes of believing that their peculiarities of doctrine or practice make them singularly well-pleasing to God. With this goes censoriousness towards outsiders, which often presumes to voice the disapprobation of God. The Pharisees and the Associates, who seem to have numbered among them in the second century most of the learned and their disciples, conspicuously illustrate these faults. It is not without detriment to himself that a man cherishes the consciousness of being superior to his fellows, and the injury to his character is not least when he has the best reason for his opinion."

<sup>81</sup> "There was a sect of Jews who boasted of observing very strictly the law of their fathers. . . . They were called Pharisees. They were able to hold their own before kings, far-seeing and planning openly to oppose and hurt them. In point of fact, whereas the whole Jewish people had confirmed its loyalty towards the Emperor and the royal government with oaths, these men had not sworn, to the number of more than six thousand. . . ." (*Antiquities of the Jews*, XVII, 2, 4, 41-2). Josephus himself was a Pharisee, and he everywhere speaks of the sect with a great veneration; the severity of this particular judgment is not due to him, but comes from a source transcribed without reflection.



At the same time, amongst the Pharisees as in the Jewish people, God had reserved some chosen ones: St. Paul himself is a proof of this.

The Pharisees aimed above all at being a religious sect. In political matters, their attitude was dictated by their beliefs. The majority thought above all else of the privileges of Israel, and like the six thousand of whom Josephus speaks, they rejected all foreign domination, all oaths given to strangers, and also all taxes levied by them (*Matthew* xxii, 17 *et seq.*). But some of them saw in the subjection imposed upon Israel a divine Judgment to which one ought to submit.<sup>82</sup> When the catastrophe of A.D. 70, and the still more terrible one of A.D. 134, had destroyed once and for all the political independence of Israel, the Sadducees and the Zealots disappeared,<sup>83</sup> but the Pharisees retained their influence over the faithful Jews; they retain it still to-day.

### *The Essenes*

The Sadducees and the Pharisees were both closely mixed up with Christian origins, as is shown sufficiently by the *Gospels* and *Acts*. On the other hand, the Essenes are never mentioned in the New Testament, and they seem, in fact, to have remained completely outside the sphere of action of Jesus and His Apostles. Hence we shall not have much to say of them. For the rest, this sect is little known.<sup>84</sup> We have to guide us a brief mention in Pliny,<sup>85</sup> two texts of Philo,<sup>86</sup> and two in Josephus.<sup>87</sup>

Of all these, the most detailed by far is that in the *War of the Jews*. If we could regard this as the recollection of a man who had

<sup>82</sup> E.g. Pollio and Sameas; *Antiquities of the Jews*, XIV, 9, 4, 176; XV, 1, 1, 3-4.

<sup>83</sup> The Zealots are only indirectly connected with the history of Christianity: their religious position was that of the Pharisees, but their zeal for the Law took the form of an armed rebellion. They appeared in the first years of the first century in the troubles which followed the death of Herod and the Roman intervention (cf. above, p. 26), but they took the name of Zealots only just before the great revolt (*Wars of the Jews*, IV, 3, 9, 160-1). Cf. Lagrange, *op. cit.*, p. 214.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. Schuerer, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 651-80; E. Meyer, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 393-402; Bauer, art. *Essener* in Pauly-Wissowa, *Suppl.*, IV, pp. 386-430; Lagrange, *op. cit.*, pp. 307-30.

<sup>85</sup> *Hist. nat.*, V, 17.

<sup>86</sup> *Quod omnis probus liber*, XII, 75-91; Apology, apud Eusebius, *Praep. evang.*, VIII, 11.

<sup>87</sup> *Wars of the Jews*, II, 8, 2-13, 119-61; *Antiquities of the Jews*, XVIII, 1, 5, 18-21. These texts have been gathered together by Lagrange, *op. cit.*, pp. 307-18.

himself lived the life of the Essenes, it would be of great interest. Unfortunately, it is difficult to attribute it so great a value. If we compare the two passages in Josephus with one another, we find that the later one harmonises ill with the earlier, that it is much less detailed, and depends on Philo.<sup>88</sup> However careless Josephus may have been in transcribing his sources, it would be difficult to imagine that, knowing by personal experience the life of the Essenes and having already described it from his own recollections, he would have recourse in the second passage to the testimony of an earlier writer who had never seen them.

These considerations must lead an historian to be very reserved in making use of these passages. What we may learn from them is the existence of the Essenian sect in the first century of our era. Their chief centre was situated near Engaddi, on the western bank of the Dead Sea. There they lived in common a simple and frugal life, inspired by a great care for ritual purity. In this care, as in the exaggerated respect for the rest of the Sabbath day,<sup>89</sup> the Essenes exceeded even the Pharisees, and were poles apart from the teaching of Christ. In other respects, and above all by their community life and their celibacy,<sup>90</sup> they resembled externally the first Christians, but in spite of this external resemblance, the religious sentiment which inspired them was very different.<sup>91</sup>

The religion of the Essenes was differentiated from ordinary Judaism by some singular characteristics, which are, however, difficult to determine with precision. Philo praises their disciples

<sup>88</sup> Those who led a communal life were more than four thousand: *Antiquities of the Jews*, XVIII, 21; *Q. o. pr. lib.*, 75. According to *Antiquities of the Jews*, 21, their celibacy was undertaken, as by Philo (*Apol.*, 14) for fear of discord. According to *Wars of the Jews*, 121, its motive was the unfaithfulness of woman. The text of *Antiquities of the Jews* stresses above all the common life, the preference given to work in the fields, and the fact that the Essenes kept away from the Temple. In *Wars of the Jews*, the life of the Essenes is represented as dominated above all by a care for ritual purity.

<sup>89</sup> They were forbidden to go to stool on the Sabbath day (*Wars of the Jews*, 147).

<sup>90</sup> Celibacy was not imposed on all: there were married Essenes (*Wars of the Jews*, 160-1).

<sup>91</sup> A Christian prefers virginity to marriage in order to belong more completely to the Lord (I Cor. vii, 32); the Essene prefers it because of ritual purity, or again to avoid discord, or by mistrust of womenfolk. The communal life of the Christians at Jerusalem, again, had nothing in common with the Essenes. The former did not withdraw to the desert or separate themselves from the world, but in a great spirit of charity and detachment they put all things in common in order the better to serve God.

as being, amongst other things, "splendid servants of God, sacrificing no animals, but doing their best to make their thoughts such as were fitting to priests." Josephus writes in turn: "They send offerings to the Temple, but do not offer sacrifices, for they practise another kind of purification. That is why they keep away from the holy place, and sacrifice apart."<sup>92</sup>

We find amongst the Essenes some who foretold the future; Josephus especially mentions their prophecies.<sup>93</sup> He also says that the Essenes had an esoteric doctrine; when anyone was received into the sect, he took an oath "to hide nothing from the members of the sect, and to reveal nothing about them to the profane, even if tortured to death. He also swore to pass on the rules of the sect exactly as he had received them . . . and to guard with the same respect the books of the sect and the names of the angels" (*Wars of the Jews*, 141-2).

Finally, if we must understand literally a passage in Josephus, it would seem that the Essenes regarded the sun as a god.<sup>94</sup>

All these features give one the impression of a Jewish gnosis, affected not exactly by the Iranian religion, but by Oriental syncretism. The study of Christian origins will show us how virulent this Gnostic syncretism was during the first half of the second century.

## § 2. JUDAISM OF THE DISPERSION<sup>1</sup>

At the time of Christ, the Jews were much less numerous in Palestine than they were in the rest of the world. In the land of

<sup>92</sup> *Antiquities of the Jews*, 19. This text is much discussed: I reproduce it as it is translated by Reinach. The negation ("they do not offer sacrifice") is lacking in the Greek MS., but we find it in the old Latin translation and in the Epitome. Niese strikes it out, Naber retains it, as also Schuerer, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 663, n. 50, and Meyer, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 397, n. 4. On the other side are Bauer, *op. cit.*, p. 398, and Lagrange, *op. cit.*, p. 316, n. 5.

<sup>93</sup> "There are amongst them some who are strong in foretelling the future through close study of the holy books, various purifications, and the words of the prophets, and they are seldom wrong in their predictions" (*Wars of the Jews*, 159). Elsewhere he gives three instances of Essenic prophecies: *Wars of the Jews*, I, 78; II, 113; *Antiquities of the Jews*, XV, 372.

<sup>94</sup> "They dig a hole about a foot deep and there attend to their needs, covering themselves with their mantle in order not to soil the rays of God" (*Wars of the Jews*, 148).

<sup>1</sup> On the Diaspora, the two most complete studies are those of Juster, *Les Juifs dans l'empire romain*, 2 vols., Paris, 1914, and that of Schuerer, *op. cit.*, Vol. III,

Israel there were hardly more than a million;<sup>2</sup> in the other provinces of the Roman Empire they were at least four or five times as many.<sup>3</sup>

Nevertheless, Palestinian Judaism was more deserving of a detailed study than that of the Diaspora, because its influence until the fall of Jerusalem extended over all Jews everywhere. Moreover, we are concerned with Christian rather than with Jewish history, and it was in Palestine that Christianity arose, and it is there that its relations with Judaism must be studied. Later on, by reason of its triumphant expansion, the Church was in constant contact with the dispersed Jews. It made their synagogues the starting point of its propaganda, and when it had grown, these constituted centres of persecution. We must therefore study briefly the network of Jewries which in the first century extended throughout the world.

### *The Origins of the Dispersion*

For a long time before this, the Jews had established themselves outside the land of Israel, either in the neighbouring kingdom of Syria, or in the two great empires of Assyria and Egypt. The conquests of Alexander opened all the East to the Jews, and the Roman conquests did the same for the countries surrounding the Mediterranean.

They spread everywhere, as soldiers, tradespeople, slaves, or exiles. Everywhere they established themselves with the tenacity of their race, and often enjoyed the protection of princes. At

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pp. 1-187. On the origins of the Diaspora, consult: A. Causse, *Les Dispersés d'Israël*, Paris, 1929. On the religious tendencies, see Wendland, *Die Hellenistisch-Römische Kultur*, Tübingen, 1912, pp. 192-211. Short but precise descriptions in T. Reinach, art. *Judaei* in the *Dictionnaire des antiquités grecques et romaines*, pp. 619-32 (English translation in the *Jewish Encyclopædia*), and in J. Guimann, art. *Diaspora* in *Encyclopædia Judaica*, Vol. V, pp. 1088-98.

<sup>2</sup> Harnack, *Mission und Ausbreitung*, Vol. I, p. 7, reckons this population at 700,000. So also E. Meyer, *Die Bevölkerung des Altertums*, in *Handwörterbuch der Staatswissenschaften* herausg. of J. Conra, Vol. II, p. 687, Jean, 1899. Juster, on the other hand, gives 5 millions, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 210, n. 2; so also Felten, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 32.

<sup>3</sup> Harnack (*ibid.*) gives a Jewish population of from 4 to 4½ millions, in a total population of 55 millions, which makes 7 per cent of the population of the empire. Juster gives the same proportion, but thinks the figures are too low: the Jews would be about 7 millions. Gutmann (*art. cit.*, p. 1091) gives 5 million Jews, representing 8 per cent of the population.

Alexandria, Alexander, in founding the city, had given them equal rights with those of the Macedonians; <sup>4</sup> the Lagidæ protected them in their turn; <sup>5</sup> the Seleucids, who acted as persecutors and tyrants in Palestine, were in Anatolia protectors of the Jews; <sup>6</sup> the Romans, who from the time of Judas Machabæus (161 B.C.) supported the Palestinian Jews, extended in the time of Simon (139) their protection to the Jews throughout the Empire.<sup>7</sup> Cæsar granted to Hyrcanus II (B.C. 63-40) a guarantee for the Jewish privileges, and allowed him the right to intervene in their favour.<sup>8</sup> Augustus, Tiberius, and above all Claudius, protected them efficaciously, while requiring from them respect for public peace and the rights of others.<sup>9</sup>

The Roman policy towards the Jews was such as to be easily adaptable to local circumstances. In Palestine it respected the Jewish cult, and caused it to be respected by others. But it kept a close watch on political tendencies, and restrained all manifestation of independence. In Rome itself, it was careful to maintain public peace, and as soon as the Jews seemed to disturb this, it took steps against them, and if necessary expelled them. We find the same severity at Alexandria, where the Jews were very numerous and powerful. But in the Hellenic cities of less importance, where they could not constitute a great danger, Rome regarded them as Roman subjects, loyal to the Empire, and putting its interests when necessary before the particular interests of cities. The Roman Emperors

<sup>4</sup> Josephus, *Contra Apion*, II, 4, 35-7; *Wars of the Jews*, II, 18, 7, 487-8; *Antiquities of the Jews*, XIV, 10, 1, 188; Philo, *In Flaccum*, 44. Cf. Juster, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 6; Schuerer, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 35-6.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Schuerer, *op. cit.*, pp 40-50.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Ramsay, *Historical Commentary on the Galatians*, pp. 189-92.

<sup>7</sup> *I Mach.* viii, 17 et seq.; xiv, 24; xv, 15-22. Cf. Juster, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 215.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Juster, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 216. We must note, however, that several of the documents attributed to Cæsar by Josephus and quoted here by Juster seem to be older, see notes by Reinach to *Antiquities of the Jews*, XIV, 145; XIV, 241, etc.

<sup>9</sup> Tiberius was hostile to the Jews as long as Sejanus was alive, but after that he was favorable to them. In the case of Claudius, we note in particular the edicts cited by Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, XIX, 5, 2-3, 280-91. In A.D. 49 he expelled the Jews from Rome: Suetonius, *Claudius*, p. 25; *Acts* xviii, 2. At Alexandria he required the maintenance of peace. Cf. H. J. Bell, *Jews and Christians in Egypt*, London, 1924. The letter of Claudius (A.D. 42) is commented on by A. d'Alès in *Études*, Vol. CLXXXII, 1925, pp. 693-701. Two Alexandrians, Isidore and Lampo, were condemned to death by Claudius and executed as responsible for the massacre of Jews at Alexandria under Caligula in A.D. 38. On these papyri, cf. T. Reinach, *L'empereur Claude et les antisémites alexandrins* in *Revue des études juives*, XXXI, 1895, pp. 161-77, and XXXIV, 1897, pp. 296-8; Juster, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 125.

recognised this fidelity,<sup>10</sup> and in return protected the Jews against the local authorities. In vain did the magistrates of Tralles openly declare to the proconsul C. Rabirius that they disapproved of this protection: the proconsul insisted and the magistrates had to submit. Similarly, the proconsul made known his wishes to those of Laodicæa: "by reason of their friendship and alliance with us Romans, they are not to be ordered about by anyone, or suffer anything from anyone in our province."<sup>11</sup> No one will think that this immunity of the Jews was accepted by the Greeks with a good grace, but they could but submit to the Roman ruling, and those who disobeyed could be delated to the Emperor, condemned by him to death, and executed, as Isidore and Lampo were under Claudius.<sup>12</sup>

### *Importance of the Jewish Population*

It is not surprising that being thus protected by Alexander, the Lagidæ, Seleucids, and above all by the Roman Emperors, the Jews spread out in great numbers in the Mediterranean world. Already in the second century B.C. they make the Sibyl say (III, 271): "The earth is full of thy race, and the sea is full of it." Strabo, writing under Augustus, says of the Jews: "They have invaded all the cities, and it would be difficult to find a place where these people have not been received and become masters."<sup>13</sup> The Jewish writers do not stop there. Philo goes so far as to maintain that the Jews form one half of the human race,<sup>14</sup> and that in the countries in which they are established they are almost equal in number to the native population.<sup>15</sup> Speaking of Egypt which he knows well, he is more precise and at the same time more reserved, but his statements show that the Jews were very numerous: at Alexandria, two out of five sections had a majority of Jews, and were called Jewish quarters;<sup>16</sup> in the whole of Egypt Philo reckons

<sup>10</sup> The texts are collected by Juster, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 220.

<sup>11</sup> Letters of the Laodicæan magistrates, *Antiquities of the Jews*, XIV, 10, 20, 241.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. above, p. 70, n. 9.

<sup>13</sup> Quoted by Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, XIV, 7, 2, 115. Reinach wisely notes: "These last words seem to me suspect."

<sup>14</sup> *Legat. ad Caium*, 31.

<sup>15</sup> *De vita Mosis*, II, 27.

<sup>16</sup> In Flaccum, 8. Strabo said (*Antiquities of the Jews*, XIV, 117): "One whole quarter of Alexandria is reserved for this people." At the time of the massacre of Jews in A.D. 66, we gather from Josephus that they were concentrated in the Delta, or fourth quarter (*Wars of the Jews*, II, 18, 8, 495).

the Jewish population at one million,<sup>17</sup> that is, about one-eighth of the whole population. In Syria, and in Asia Minor also, the Jews seem to have been very numerous.<sup>18</sup> At Rome the importance of their colony is attested by many facts: the number of their synagogues,<sup>19</sup> their activity, feared by Cicero at the trial of Flaccus,<sup>20</sup> their mourning, noticed by all, at the funeral of Cæsar,<sup>21</sup> by the fact, again, that the Jewish ambassador who presented himself to Augustus in B.C. 4 was accompanied by eight thousand Jews of Rome.<sup>22</sup> Under Tiberius, a decree of the Senate enrolled and sent off to Sardinia four thousand young Jews who were freedmen.<sup>23</sup>

### *Civil Condition of the Jews*

Great in numbers, the Jewish Dispersion was strong above all by reason of its cohesion; its members might rank as citizens of Rome,<sup>24</sup> or of the city in which they had been born,<sup>25</sup> but whether they were thus Romans, Alexandrians, Thessalonians, or Tarsiots, they were

<sup>17</sup> *In Flaccum*, 6.

<sup>18</sup> Juster, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 210.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. J. B. Frey, *Les communautés juives à Rome aux premiers temps de l'Eglise*, in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, 1930, pp. 269-97; 1931, pp. 129-68.

<sup>20</sup> *Pro Flacco*, 28, 66.

<sup>21</sup> Suetonius, *Julius*, 84: "In summo publico luctu exterarum gentium multitudo circulatim suo quaque more lamentata est, præcipueque Judæi, qui etiam noctibus continuis bustum frequentarunt."

<sup>22</sup> *Antiquities of the Jews*, XVII, 11, 1, 300; *Wars of the Jews*, II, 6, 1, 80.

<sup>23</sup> Tacitus, *Annals*, II, 85; Suetonius, *Tiberius*, 36.

<sup>24</sup> Many Jews became Roman citizens by enfranchisement; but there were also some who were not of servile origin, and who had obtained this right by privilege; e.g. the family of Philo; on Philo's nephew, Tiberius Julius Alexander, see Schuerer, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 624, n. 85. On Roman citizenship, see Juster, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 15 *et seq.*

<sup>25</sup> Juster, Vol. II, *op. cit.*, p. 2 *et seq.* Hence the unusual situation of a Jew possessing citizenship of Rome and one or more Greek cities, and also regarding himself as a Jewish citizen. Thus St. Paul was a Roman citizen (*Acts* xvi, 37; xxii, 25), a citizen of Tarsus (xxi, 39) and a Jew (*Phil.* iii, 5; *II Cor.* xi, 22). Roman law in the time of the Republic did not allow a Roman citizen to belong to another city: "Duarum civitatum civis noster esse jure civili nemo potest" (Cicero, *Pro Balbo*, xi, 28); cf. Mommsen, *Droit public*, Vol. VI, 1, p. 51. After Augustus, on the other hand, "Roman citizenship is compatible with citizenship of all the cities of the Empire" (Mommsen, *op. cit.*, Vol. VI, 2, p. 331). Was a Jew possessing political rights outside Judea at the same time a Jewish citizen? Yes, from the standpoint of Jewish law; not, apparently, from the standpoint of Roman law. Cf. Juster, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 11, n. 3.

above all Jews. As Philo says, they regarded as their own the city where their fathers or grandfathers had lived, but they venerated Jerusalem as their metropolis.<sup>26</sup>

Such a situation was tolerated with difficulty by the Greek cities in which the Jews were established. The Alexandrians bitterly opposed their citizenship;<sup>27</sup> at Cæsarea, the struggle was still more violent: it led to bloody riots, an appeal to Rome, where the Jews were condemned by Nero, and finally the massacre of the Jews of Cæsarea: "in one hour, more than twenty thousand were slain."<sup>28</sup>

But this resistance on the part of the Greek cities could not prevail against the Roman will, and Rome usually upheld the rights of the Jews, and thus ensured in the majority of Hellenic cities the presence of citizens habitually loyal to its political policy. Nevertheless, when the interest of the Jewish fatherland came in conflict with the service of Rome, the Jews of the Empire rose up at once: we see this on the occasion of the great revolt (A.D. 66-70); and again during the last years of the reign of Trajan (A.D. 115-117) and finally in the terrible war which ranged the whole nation against Hadrian (A.D. 132-135).

This unanimity in the national struggles reveals the profound feeling in the Jews of the Diaspora. Their religious faith, and above all their religious practices, might reflect their remoteness from Jerusalem, as we shall shortly point out, but in spite of everything they remained Jews, and in case of conflict, they preferred their race and religion to all else.

Several facts show this strong religious cohesion, and amongst them is the influence exerted by the Jews of Judea on those of Mesopotamia. The latter were descended from the Israelites deported by the Assyrians and Chaldeans; they had never returned to Palestine, but nevertheless they adopted all the reforms elaborated by the Scribes from the time of Esdras.<sup>29</sup> Of all the dispersed Jews, the most numerous and most powerful were those of Alexandria. These remained in close touch with the Jews of Judea; their literary output, which was considerable, aimed chiefly at

<sup>26</sup> *In Flaccum*, 46.

<sup>27</sup> This is still a matter of controversy. Cf. Schuerer, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 35 *et seq.*; Juster, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 204.

<sup>28</sup> *Wars of the Jews*, II, 13, 7, 266-70; 13, 4, 284-92; 18, 1, 457. This massacre was immediately followed by the great rebellion of A.D. 66.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Juster, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 499, and n. 4.



making known to pagans the history and belief of the Jews, the Mosaic legislation, the great figures and martyrs of Judaism, and particularly those of the times of the Machabees.<sup>30</sup>

### *Privileges of the Proselytes*

This religious fidelity was moreover protected by national feeling: race, worship and faith were all linked together in the attachment of the Jews to Israel, and to the pagans, were all one. By a strange departure from the ordinary tenor of their legislation, they refused the enjoyment of Jewish privileges to those Jews who did not practise their religion;<sup>31</sup> and conversely, they granted it to those who were not Jews by birth, but had adopted the Jewish religion.<sup>32</sup>

This derogation is understood without difficulty if we remember what were the Jewish privileges, and the reasons which had led the Romans to consent to them: they consisted in dispensations from certain civil or military duties, which all helped to give the Jews the right to live according to their conscience. Only those had a right to these privileges who regarded the Jewish faith as binding on their consciences, and in fact observed it.

### *Apostasies*

Protected in this way by their attachment to the Jewish nation and by the Roman legislation itself, the Jews were almost unanimous in their fidelity to their religion. But there were apostasies in the Diaspora; Philo denounced them more than once; he knew people who "arrive at such a degree of madness that they do not even reserve the possibility of repentance, making themselves the slaves of idols, and professing this slavery by graving it, not on sheets of papyri, but, like animals, on their bodies, with red-hot iron, so as to make this mark ineffaceable."<sup>33</sup> Elsewhere he shows how "the apostates from the holy laws" fall into all the vices.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>30</sup> On this literature, see Schuerer, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 420-719; Lagrange, *Judaïsme*, pp. 494-580; Wendland, *op. cit.*, pp. 192-211.

<sup>31</sup> Edict of May 21st, 49 B.C.: Lucius Lentulus, consul, says: "I exempt from service, for reasons of a religious nature, the Jews who are Roman citizens and who seem to me to observe and practise the Jewish rites at Ephesus" (*Antiquities of the Jews*, XIV, 10, 16, 234); cf. *ibid.*, 228.

<sup>32</sup> Juster, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 232.

<sup>33</sup> *De special. leg.*, I, 8, 58. Cf. *Levit.* xix, 28.

<sup>34</sup> *De virtutibus (de paenit.)*, II, 182.

Elsewhere again he denounces the wicked, in whom he sees the posterity of Cain: Greek sophistry has perverted them and led them to despise God and his law.<sup>35</sup> Others see nothing more in the biblical narratives than legends similar to those of the Greek mythology;<sup>36</sup> others, lastly, while adhering still to Judaism, elude its legislation by their allegorical exegesis: "they regard the written laws as symbols of intelligible realities, they study these realities with great care, but neglect the laws."<sup>37</sup>

### *Influence of Hellenism*

We could find elsewhere other examples of these apostasies<sup>38</sup> and of this syncretism.<sup>39</sup> Such excesses, nevertheless, were rare in the Diaspora; they were felt to be scandalous. It was not by these complete defections that the Jews of the Dispersion differed from those of Judea, it was by their attachment to Hellenism, by their striving to be citizens of the world. To the Israelites of Palestine, Greek civilisation was regarded as the reign of the wicked, the Seleucids, the Herodians, the Romans; it was the wicked world, the kingdom of Satan. To the Jewish citizens of Alexandria, Smyrna, or Ephesus, Hellenism appeared under a different colour; it was a great temptation, doubtless, but also a great force, with a great attraction; one did not repudiate it, but one endeavoured to assimilate it. At this time, when the Greeks were everywhere fabricating apocryphal works, putting their dreams under the patronage of Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, Timæus, or Thucydides,

<sup>35</sup> *De posteritate Caini*, 33-48. Cf. our *History of the Dogma of the Trinity*, Vol. I, p. 134.

<sup>36</sup> *De confus. ling.*, 2-3; *ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *De migrat. Abr.*, 89; *ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> In an inscription of the time of Hadrian (C.I.G., 3148, quoted by Schuerer, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 14), we find a list of people "previously Jews," who have made a gift to the city.

<sup>39</sup> In the Temple of Pan at Edfu, two inscriptions (Dittenberger, *O.G.I.*, 73 and 74) express the gratitude of the "Jew Ptolemy" and of the "Jew Theodotus" to the god; the donors of these ex-voto offerings do not make it plain whether they mean thereby Pan or Jahveh.—The book *On the Jews*, written by Artapan before Alexander Polyhistor (80 B.C.) and which is known to us by quotations in Josephus and Eusebius, is more surprising still: all the institutions of the Egyptians, including their religion, are attributed to Jacob and his sons, and especially to Moses: Jacob and his sons founded the sanctuaries of Athos and Heliopolis (Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica*, IX, p. 23); Moses instituted the cult of Ibis and Apis (*ibid.*, xxvii, 9 and 12), etc. Cf. Schuerer, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 478.

the Jews similarly professed to quote the Sibyls, Orpheus, Phocylides, Menander. They translated the holy books into Greek; the translators were hallowed with a glorious legend: they became the seventy prophets inspired by God, dear to the king and dear to the people.<sup>40</sup> The exegetes follow the translators; they make the Bible the source of all philosophy and of all science.<sup>41</sup>

### Philo

Of all the commentators on the Bible, the best known is Philo.<sup>42</sup> Born about 20 B.C., in a rich and influential Jewish family, with a brother an alabarch, and Tiberius Alexander as a nephew, he is well qualified to represent Alexandrian Judaism in the time of Christ. He has, moreover, the rare good luck to have survived not only in some citations in Eusebius, but in numerous works of exegesis or history which enable us to know him well.

He was a scholar and a learned philosopher, but nevertheless he remained attached to his people and his faith. He made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to pray there and offer sacrifice. In his old age, he undertook in A.D. 39-40 an embassy to the Emperor Caius in defence of the Jews.<sup>43</sup> The date of his death is unknown. His chief works form an allegorical commentary on the Pentateuch.<sup>44</sup> To these we must add a few philosophical treatises,<sup>45</sup> two historical

<sup>40</sup> This story was told first in the letter of Aristeus in the second century B.C. (Eng. tr. in Charles, *Pseudepigrapha*, pp. 83-122). It was later on embellished with new additions. Cf. R. Tramontano, *La Lettera di Aristea*, Naples, 1931, p. 113-26.

<sup>41</sup> On all this see our *History of the Dogma of the Trinity*, Vol. I, p. 134.

<sup>42</sup> The works still extant in Greek have been edited many times. The best edition until recently was that of Mangey, London, 1742, 2 vols., but now we have that of Cohn-Wendland, 6 vols., with 2 vols. of tables by Leisegang (Berlin, Reimer and De Gruyter, 1896-1930). The works existing in an Armenian translation have been edited with a Latin version by Aucher, Venice, 1822-6. Principal studies: I. Heinemann, *Philos. griechische und jüdische Bildung*, Breslau, 1932; J. Drummond, *Philo Judaeus*, London, 1888; E. Bréhier, *Les idées philosophiques et religieuses de Philo d'Alexandrie*, Paris, 1908; W. Bousset, *Jüdisch-Christlicher Schulbetrieb in Alexandria und Rom*, Goettingen, 1915 (on Philo: pp. 8-154); Schuerer, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 633-716; Lebreton, *History of the Dogma of the Trinity*, Vol. I, pp. 133-90; Lagrange, *Judaïsme*, pp. 542-86.

<sup>43</sup> He himself gives the story of this embassy in his book, *On the Embassy to Caius*. This, together with the book *Contra Flaccum*, is translated into French with a long introduction by F. Delaunay, *Philon, Ecrits historiques*, Paris, 1870.

<sup>44</sup> One of these has been translated into French: *Le commentaire allégorique des saintes lois*, by E. Bréhier, Paris, 1909.

<sup>45</sup> *De aeternitate mundi*, ed. Cumont, Berlin, 1891; *Quod omnis probus liber*; this gives a description of the life of the Essenes (cf. *supra*, pp. 67-68); De

works,<sup>46</sup> and the book on the Contemplative Life, which describes and praises the life of the Therapeutæ.<sup>47</sup>

What his life reveals is fully developed in his books. Philo was a believing and pious Jew. This gives his theology a firmness and an authority which we do not find in Greek speculation; it also explains the truly religious ideas we find in his works: God is good, not in the purely metaphysical sense of Plato, but with a merciful goodness which spreads good around Him; He is peace and liberty, perfection and end. Supremely happy Himself, He is the principle of beatitude for all men; He invites each one of us to beatitude, draws us by His call, and leads us on by His action.

But while he was a faithful Jew, Philo was also a Greek philosopher.<sup>48</sup> His God is no longer the God of Israel, but the God of the world; Jewish history is transformed by his allegorical method into a doctrine of salvation;<sup>49</sup> Abraham is no longer the father of the faithful, but the first philosopher: he was the first to recognise that the world has a supreme cause, and that it is governed by Providence.<sup>50</sup> The divine transcendence is no longer regarded as having its source in holiness, as in Jewish thought, but it arises from God's ideal greatness, which renders Him superior to all determination.<sup>51</sup> All this directs the soul towards a natural theology rather than to a positive faith, and the soul, inspired with a desire of God, wonders how she may attain to Him.

Philo endeavours to solve this problem by his theology of intermediaries: between God and the world there are the powers. It is by these that God's action reaches the world, and it is by them that man's contemplation can rise up towards God. They are sometimes identified with the angels of Jewish theology, sometimes with the Platonic ideas, and at other times with the Stoic powers.

*Providentia; Alexander, sive de eo quod rationem habeant bruta animalia.* These two last works exist only in an Armenian version.

<sup>46</sup> *Supra*, p. 76, n. 43.

<sup>47</sup> This work was long regarded as doubtful or spurious, but is now generally regarded as authentic. Cf. Massebieau, in *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, XVI, 1887, pp. 170 *et seq.*, 284 *et seq.*, Conybeare's edition of the work, 1895.

<sup>48</sup> On this question of Judaism and Hellenism, see especially Heinemann, *op. cit.*; cf. *Recherches de Science religieuse*, 1933, pp. 331-4.

<sup>49</sup> Bréhier, *Les idées philosophiques de Philon*, pp. 48-9; 2nd edn., pp. 59-61.

<sup>50</sup> *De virtutibus*, 216.

<sup>51</sup> *Leg. alleg.*, II, 86; *De sacrif. Abel*, 92; *Quod Deus sit immut.*, 62, 55; *De poster. Caini*, 168.

Their personality is only apparent, and arises simply from the weakness of the perceiving mind.<sup>52</sup>

### *The Logos*

Of all the powers, the highest and the nearest to God is the Logos. In Philo's theology, it plays a part similar to that of the other powers, but in an eminent degree: it is the intermediary which enables God to act upon the world, and men to elevate themselves towards God; it is the object of contemplation to those who are not able to attain to God Himself. Just as the powers are identified with the angels of the Bible, so also the Logos is symbolised by the Angel of the Lord, the High Priest, the Place, and the Dwelling. The Logos is sometimes called the elder son of God, the younger being the sensible world.<sup>53</sup> And just as the powers are identified with ideas, so also the Logos is regarded as the intelligible world, the exemplar of all beings and particularly of man; it is also, as for the Stoics, the support, the bond of union, the physical law and the moral law.

The Logos is not God.<sup>54</sup> Is it a person? What we know of the powers prepares us for the reply: the Logos, the supreme power, has, like the other powers, only a fugitive and vague personality, due above all to our infirmity. To the human mind, too feeble to gaze upon the divine sun, these intermediaries appear as distinct beings, and gradually, by contemplation and worship, the soul rises from one to the other and towards God. But this multiplicity

<sup>52</sup> "God then, in the midst of the two powers which assist Him, presents Himself to the mind which contemplates Him sometimes as one single object, sometimes as three: one only, when the mind is purified, and having gone beyond not only the multiplicity of numbers but also the neighbouring dyad of the monad, approaches the pure idea, simple and perfect in itself; three, when it has not yet been initiated into the great mysteries, and still studies the lesser ones, and when, being unable to grasp the Being by itself and without outside help, it attains to Him in his works, as creating or as governing" (*De Abraham*, 122). A little later on (131) Philo returns again to this "triple impression produced by one unique subject."

<sup>53</sup> Sometimes also the world is called "the only begotten and well beloved son of God" (*De ebriet.*, 30).

<sup>54</sup> There are in Philo three passages in which, under the influence of the text on which he is commenting, he calls the Logos God: *De somniis*, I, 228-30; *Leg. alleg.*, III, 207-8; *Qu. in Gen.*, apud Eusebius, *Praep. evang.*, VII, 13. But he is careful in these three passages to weaken the force of the expression, which he considers an improper one. Elsewhere, and with the same reservation, he gives the title of "God" to the world or to the stars.

is only apparent, and if the eye is healthy and the mind strong, and if it can fix its gaze upon the sun without seeing double or triple, then it will see God as He is, in His unity.<sup>55</sup>

### *Influence of Philo*

This theology of Philo has for a long time enjoyed the advantage due to the state of the texts and the privileged situation resulting therefrom. Philo is one of the few survivors of that Jewish world; his isolation has increased his stature, and often to his speculations has been attributed an influence which they did not in fact exercise. The historical studies of the last twenty years have greatly reduced this influence. It was supposed that Philo had greatly influenced neo-Platonism and especially Plotinus;<sup>56</sup> the work of recent historians<sup>57</sup> has dispelled this illusion. In 1903 Loisy wrote: "The influence of Philo's ideas on John is unquestionable," but in 1921: "If there are manifold affinities between the doctrines of our Gospel and those of Philo, the differences are no less considerable, and, moreover, it is not likely that the Johannine gospel depends literally on the Philonian writings."<sup>58</sup> But it was thought that at any rate Philo's exegesis had exercised a great influence on that of St. Justin.<sup>59</sup> A more careful study of Justin, however, has led to the acknowledgment that the writings of the apologist are altogether independent of Philo.<sup>60</sup>

In reality, Philo's influence affected the Alexandrian exegetes, and chiefly Clement and Origen. On these it was considerable and often unfortunate, but outside Alexandria we may seek in vain for any trace of it. Even at Alexandria it affected only the exegetes;

<sup>55</sup> The above outline of the theology of Philo is based on the more complete study in our *History of the Dogma of the Trinity*, Vol. I, pp. 133-90. The reader will find there a more detailed study of texts and doctrines.

<sup>56</sup> E.g. Guyot, *L'infinité divine depuis Philon le Juif jusqu'à Plotin*, and *Les reminiscences de Philon le Juif chez Plotin*, Paris, 1906.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Wendland, *op. cit.*, p. 210, and above all the works of Bréhier on Philo and Plotinus.

<sup>58</sup> *Le quatrième Evangile*, 1st edn., p. 154; 2nd edn., p. 88. On this subject cf. our *History of the Doctrine of the Trinity*, Vol. I, n. vii, *The doctrine of the Logos in Philo and St. John*, pp. 447-50.

<sup>59</sup> P. Heinisch, *Der Einfluss Philos auf die älteste Exegese (Barnabas, Justin und Clemens von Alexandria)*, Munster, 1908.

<sup>60</sup> *Histoire du dogme de la trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 663-77. Cf. Harnack, *Judentum und Christentum in Justins Dialog*, in *Texte und Untersuchungen*, XXXIX, p. 90.

the biblical texts interpreted by Philo often passed into their works with the symbolical signification which Philo had given them. In this way the Philonian theology spread into the books of Clement, and into some of those of Origen. Pagans left Philo alone, and the Jews did the same. Jerusalem remained the centre of Judaism until the destruction of the city, and after that Lydda took its place. Alexandria never had the same position.<sup>61</sup>

### *Proselytism*

The Diaspora nevertheless played an important part in the history of the origins of Christianity, not so much because of its literature, but rather because of its proselytism. In the days of Jesus, this proselytism was very ardent,<sup>62</sup> and its success considerable.<sup>63</sup>

Scattered throughout the world, the Jews were convinced that their dispersion was providential: "He hath therefore scattered you among the Gentiles who know Him not, that you may declare His wonderful works, and make them know that there is no other almighty God besides Him" (*Tobias* xiii, 4). This thought of old Tobias was familiar to all Jews.<sup>64</sup> Not content to profit by their dissemination, they "went round about the sea and the land to make one proselyte" (*Matt.* xxiii, 15). Every Jew was "convinced that he is the guide of the blind, a light of them that are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of infants, having the form of knowledge and of truth in the Law."<sup>65</sup> After the great catastrophe of A.D. 70 and, above all, in A.D. 134, Judaism, battered and uprooted, took refuge in isolation. Then one could say that

<sup>61</sup> On Philo's influence, we may quote the very just reflections of Wendland, *Die hellenisch-römische Kultur*, p. 210 *et seq.*: "The question of Philo's influence seems to me to call for revision." He sets out to prove that in Christian literature only the Alexandrians show a strong Philonian influence, and that so far as neo-Platonism is concerned, the influence attributed to Philo is unlikely and unproven. This was written in 1912: nowadays the matter is still clearer.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Schuerer, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 162-4; Juster, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 253 and n. 11.

<sup>63</sup> On the proselytes, see Schuerer, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 150-187; Juster, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 253-90.

<sup>64</sup> Rabbi Eleazer: "God has dispersed the Jews in order to facilitate proselytism" (*b. Pesachim*, 87b, quoted by Juster, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 254, n. O).

<sup>65</sup> *Rom.* ii, 19-20. Already in the second century B.C. the Jewish Sibyl said: "They (the Jews) will be to all men the guide of life."

proselytism was a disease in Israel: at the time of Jesus it was its glory.<sup>66</sup>

This propaganda so keenly carried on produced results: Josephus could write: "Many (pagans) have adopted our laws; some of them have remained faithful to them, others, lacking in courage, have apostatised."<sup>67</sup>

Courage was indeed required to adhere completely to Judaism and to remain attached to it: one had to adopt the Jewish doctrine, undergo circumcision, receive a baptism, and offer a sacrifice.<sup>68</sup> Of all these obligations, the most onerous was that of circumcision. Many pagans regarded it with repugnance, not only because of the rite itself, but above all because they regarded it as an enrolling in the Jewish nation, and consequently the abandonment of the city to which they had previously belonged. Tacitus echoes this mistrust: "The first instruction given to the circumcised is to despise the gods and to abjure the fatherland, to forget parents, children, brothers."<sup>69</sup>

Judaism was the faith and hope of Israel; one could not adhere to it completely without becoming an Israelite. This nationalist character was a great hindrance to its development and its propaganda. The majority of those who were attracted by the preaching of Jewish doctrines contented themselves with adopting Jewish beliefs, and often Jewish rites as well, but without submitting themselves to circumcision. They formed numerous groups of sympathisers round the synagogues, and were called "those fearing God." The Jews, who understood this repugnance in pagans, contented themselves with this half-adhesion; they knew that the first steps would often lead to others,<sup>70</sup> and they were proud to see the Hellenic world so widely won, almost unconsciously, to Jewish rites and

<sup>66</sup> On this change of attitude towards proselytes, cf. Billerbeck, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 924-31. The description of proselytes as "the lepers of Israel" is attributed to Rabbi Chelbo (about 300), and is quoted many times in the Talmud (*Quiddushin*, 70b; *Jebamoth*, 109b, 47b; *Nidda*, 13b).

<sup>67</sup> *Contra Apion*, II, 10.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Dobschuetz, *Proselyten*, in *P.R.E.*, XVI, pp. 161-81; M. Friedlaender, *La propagande religieuse des Juifs avant l'ère chrétienne*, in *R.E.J.*, XXX, 1895, pp. 161-81; I. Lévi, *Le prosélytisme juif*, *ibid.*, L, 1905, pp. 1-9; LI, 1906, pp. 1-31; LIII, 1907, pp. 51-61; Juster, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 255, n. 1.

<sup>69</sup> *History*, V, 5. This repugnance for circumcision was one of the reasons why women were more easily won to Judaism than men.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. the classic text of Juvenal, *Satire*, XIV, 96-106: the father keeps the Sabbath; the son has himself circumcised, despises the Roman laws, and reveres only the Jewish law.



ideas. "The multitude itself," writes Josephus, "is long since inspired with a great zeal for our pious practices, and there is not a town amongst the Greeks, nor a people amongst the barbarians, where our custom of weekly rest has not spread, and where fasts, the lighting of lamps, and many of our laws concerning food are not observed. . . ." <sup>71</sup>

This wide diffusion of Jewish beliefs and rites very soon led to a sharp reaction,<sup>72</sup> which the national risings of the Jews made still more violent. Christian propaganda by its rapid and profound success stifled Jewish proselytism; the pagans could adhere to the true religion, and to the worship of the One God, without being compelled to abjure their nation and to enrol themselves in another: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, but all are one in Christ Jesus." But we must not forget that Christian propaganda had been prepared by Jewish preaching; the history of the missions of St. Paul shows us that his efforts were first directed to the Jews, the first beneficiaries of the Gospel, and then to the proselytes and those who feared God grouped round the Jews, and lastly to the pagan masses.<sup>73</sup> To Israel, the missionary people, God had offered through the prophets, and especially through Isaias, the magnificent work of conquering the world for God. Israel was too passionately jealous of its national greatness, had lost sight of its religious function and had fallen from it.<sup>74</sup> The proselytism of the dispersed Jews on the eve of the Christian era may be regarded as a rough attempt at this conquest: the task abandoned by Israel was confided to the Church.

<sup>71</sup> *Contra Apion*, II, 39, 282. Seneca, quoted by St. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, VI, 10-11, writes of the Jews: "Usque eo sceleratissimae gentis consuetudo valuit, ut per omnes jam terras recepta sit. . . . Illi tamen causas ritus sui noverunt; major pars populi facit quod cur faciat ignorat."

<sup>72</sup> Cf. Wendland, *op. cit.*, p. 195 and n. 4. There was at this time a whole anti-Jewish literature (Schuerer, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 528-45), and the anti-Semitic riots at Alexandria show that the people gladly sided against the Jews.

<sup>73</sup> Wendland, *op. cit.*, p. 211, rightly notes the indefensible exaggeration of E. Havet (*Le christianisme et ses origines*, Vol. IV, p. 102, Paris, 1884), according to whom St. Paul converted no Pagan who had not already been affected by Jewish propaganda. Cf. Harnack, *Mission und Ausbreitung*, p. 59 and n. 3.

<sup>74</sup> This failure of Israel is one of the main themes in the preaching of Jesus.

# JESUS CHRIST AND THE BEGINNING OF THE CHURCH<sup>1</sup>

## *Christ in History*

WHEN St. Paul was a prisoner at Cæsarea in the year A.D. 60 and expounded to King Agrippa the mission of Jesus and his own Apostolate, he was able to say: "The king knoweth of these things, to whom also I speak with confidence. For I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him. For neither was any of these things done in a corner" (*Acts* xxvi, 26). All historians share this assurance: the life and death of Jesus, the beginnings of the Church at Jerusalem, the travels and preaching of St. Paul—all this is clear to us in the full light of history.

Born "in the days of Herod the king," put to death, as Tacitus records,<sup>2</sup> by the procurator Pontius Pilate, baptised by John, condemned by Annas and Caiphas, Jesus lived and preached in Judea in a period well known to us, and came up against those procurators, tetrarchs and high priests of whom we have written in the preceding chapter, utilising Josephus, Philo, and pagan historians. From the short life of Jesus the Church was born. Full of life and vigour, it flourished in Jerusalem, in Judea, then in Syria, and then in the whole Greco-Roman world. In A.D. 51, the proconsul of Achaia, Gallio, brother to Seneca, saw it spreading round him at

<sup>1</sup> Bibliography.—On this subject there is an immense bibliography. We confine ourselves to indicating the works which seem to us to be the most useful: L. de Grandmaison, *Jesus Christ*, Eng. tr. in 3 vols.; M. J. Lagrange, *The Gospel of Jesus Christ*, Eng. tr., London, 1938; J. Lebreton, *The Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ*, Eng. tr. in 2 vols.; F. Prat, *Jésus Christ, Sa vie, sa doctrine, son œuvre*, Paris, 1933, 2 vols.; A. Goodier, *The Public Life of Our Lord Jesus Christ*, London, 1931, 2 vols.; J. Sickenberger, *Leben Jesu nach den vier Evangelien, Kurzgefasste Erklärung*, Münster, 1932. These are Catholic works. Amongst non-Catholic works we may mention: A. C. Headlam, *Life and Teaching of Jesus the Christ*, 2nd edn., London 1927 (Anglican); M. Goguel, *La vie de Jésus*, Paris, 1932 (Liberal Protestant); J. Klausner, *Jésus de Nazareth*, Paris, 1933, translated from the Hebrew original published at Jerusalem in 1922 (Jewish); A. Loisy, *La naissance du christianisme*, Paris, 1933 (radical critic); C. Guignebert, *Jésus*, Paris, 1933 (*id.*). A history of the subject in the nineteenth century and the first years of the twentieth will be found in A. Schweitzer, *Geschichte der Leben Jesu Forschung*, Tübingen, 1931.

<sup>2</sup> *Annals*, III, 15, 44.

Corinth; in A.D. 64 Nero's persecution at Rome affected, according to Tacitus,<sup>3</sup> a "great multitude." That was only thirty-five years after the death of Jesus. All this has not the appearance of a dream, in an imaginary setting; all "takes its place in an historical setting of unquestioned continuity."<sup>4</sup>

### *The Gospels*

These great events live again for us in writings in which we hear the voice of the primitive church and its leaders—the *Gospels*, *Epistles*, and *Acts*. That becomes apparent to us on the threshold of this history in the study of the life of Jesus. The Gospels are not just literary works which have resulted from the initiative of a few writers; they are not books created by the authors whose names they bear, Matthew, Mark, Luke, or even John: they are catecheses taught for some time previously, and finally put in writing.<sup>5</sup>

Certainly, these books bear the individual impress of the witnesses who have drawn them up or on whom they depend: in Matthew we recognise the Apostle of the Jews converted to Christianity, stressing the prophecies of the Old Testament, showing in the Gospel the fulfilment of the Law, warning the disciples against the leaven of the Pharisees. Mark is the interpreter of Peter, and this gives to his Gospel the freshness and charm of Galilean memories; Luke, the companion of St. Paul, did not know the Lord personally, but as a diligent historian he profited by his lengthy stay at Cæsarea to question the disciples of Jesus and to gather recollections of his infancy from Mary.<sup>6</sup> Of all the evangelists, John has most deeply impressed his own personality on his book. We shall describe it later on.<sup>7</sup>

These individual characteristics give to the witness of the evan-

<sup>3</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>4</sup> L. de Grandmaison, *Jesus Christ*, Eng. tr., Vol. I, p. 4.

<sup>5</sup> These ideas are developed more at length in *The Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ*, Vol. I, pp. xiii *et seq.*

<sup>6</sup> How were these recollections transmitted to the evangelist? Orally or by writing? The question is a disputed one, and is of little importance to us here. Cf. *Life and Teaching of Jesus*, Vol. I, p. 4.

<sup>7</sup> *Infra*, ch. v. sec. 2. On the characteristics and origin of our four Gospels, cf. L. de Grandmaison, *Jesus Christ*, Eng. tr., Vol. I, pp. 56-190; Huby, *L'Évangile et les Évangiles*, 1929. The Gospel of St. Luke is earlier than the *Acts*, which most probably date to the end of St. Paul's captivity, about A.D. 63. The two other synoptic gospels are prior to Luke; the Gospel of St. John belongs to the very last years of the first century.

gelists a character which makes them nearer to us, and more persuasive. But at the same time, the testimony which these books bring us is above all the testimony of the Church. From the very first, this witness is presented as a collective one: it is not a number of isolated individuals but the entire group of Apostles who narrate the life and teaching of the Master whom they followed during the whole course of His public life and even after His death, until His Ascension. In one of His last appearances, Jesus had said to them: "You shall be witnesses to me"; this testimony, given in all fidelity and freedom, was their first duty, and to the Jewish magistrates who sought to impose silence upon them, they replied through Peter, their head and spokesman, "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Acts iv, 20; cf., v. 29).

### *The Witness of the Church*

It was from this daily preaching by the Church that the Gospel arose, and its character and guarantee come from the same source. Its aim was not to satisfy the curiosity of its readers, but to uphold the faith of the believers. Towards the end of his gospel, St. John writes (xx, 30-31): "Many other signs also did Jesus in the sight of his disciples, which are not written in this book, but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name." The other evangelists have the same aim: the good news which they bring is salvation; their whole aim is to bring out the person of the Saviour, His teaching and His redemptive work.

The Church, then, did not aim at giving us a complete account of the life of Christ which would enable us to study and date all its development; in endeavouring to understand and interpret its testimony, we must respect its nature, and see in it a document of religious history rather than a biography of Jesus; its lacunæ must not surprise us, nor the difficulty which we often find in localising the incidents, or marking their date or succession.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> We have set forth elsewhere (*Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ*, Vol. I, pp. xxii-xxxii) the chief chronological problems presented by the life of Christ. We will not reproduce the discussion here, but will recall the conclusions. As we have said above (p. 25, n. 2), the Christian era was fixed by Dionysius Exiguus a few years too late. Jesus was born at the latest in the year 5 B.C., and most probably in 7 or 8 B.C. The preaching of John the Baptist probably began in the autumn of A.D. 27; the baptism of Jesus a few months later; at the Pasch of A.D. 28 Jesus was at Jerusalem and expelled the merchants from the Temple. After a

On the other hand, this religious character of the testimony provides us with the most certain guarantee of its fidelity. It was by contemplating the miracles of Jesus that the first disciples were converted (*John* ii, 11); it was by hearing them or reading their account that the new Christians came in their turn to the Faith. The office of an Apostle was thus that of a faithful witness, attesting what he had seen, heard, and touched, and by his testimony putting his catechumens in contact with Christ. If the facts which he reported were not true, his witness would be a lie, and the faith of his converts would be vain.<sup>9</sup>

### *The Forerunner*

In this Judea, invaded by so many foreigners, oppressed by so many tyrants, and in which the Jews themselves were so divided, and for the most part so little prepared for the Kingdom of God, a voice suddenly made itself heard in the desert: "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand" (*Matt.* iii, 2).

For a long time the words of the psalmist had been sadly repeated: "There is now no prophet" (*Ps.* lxxiii, 9). God remained silent, and the Messiah held back. But now at last a prophet appeared in Israel: John. Who was he? No one knew; but his voice was so powerful, and he spoke with such authority that people asked themselves whether he was not indeed himself the Messiah.

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few weeks spent in Judea, Jesus went through Samaria and returned to Galilee; He preached there, gathered Apostles round Him, and sent them on a mission in the year A.D. 29. Just before the Pasch of A.D. 29 there took place the first multiplication of the loaves; a little after, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for the Pasch or the Pentecost, and there cured the paralytic in the pool of Bezatha. He returned to Galilee, passed through Phœnicia and the Decapolis, and went on to Cæsarea Philippi. Eight days after the event at Cæsarea, the Transfiguration took place; shortly afterwards Jesus finally left Galilee. In October He was at Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles; in December He was there again for the Feast of the Dedication. In March A.D. 30 He raised Lazarus, withdrew to Ephrem, and then returned to Jerusalem by Jericho. He was put to death there on Friday the 14th Nisan, the great day of the Pasch. According to the foregoing chronological data, this 14th Nisan must have been April 7th in the year A.D. 30. A careful and detailed discussion of all these questions will be found in the work of U. Holzmeister, *Chronologia vitæ Christi*, Rome, 1933.

<sup>9</sup> We may recall the insistence with which St. Paul affirms his responsibility as a witness: "If Christ be not risen again, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have given testimony against God, that he hath raised up Christ, whom he hath not raised up" (*I Cor.* xv, 14-15).

He denied this: "I am not worthy to loose the latchet of the shoes of the Messias." John was but a voice, the voice of the forerunner crying in the desert: "Prepare ye the way of the Lord."

All Israel was roused by this cry: towards the Jordan, where John was preaching, there came "all Judea and all they of Jerusalem" (*Mark* i, 5). The new Elias who appeared before them impressed them first by his austerity: he came from the desert, he had retained its vesture and food: he was clothed with a garment of camel's hair and a leathern girdle, he fed on locusts and wild honey. But though strict with himself, he imposed his asceticism on no one else. But he was merciless towards the Jewish pride of race, and the illusions to which it had given rise: "Do not begin to say 'We have Abraham for our Father.' For I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham. For now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be cut down and cast into the fire." The people then asked him "What shall we do?" He answered: "He that hath two coats, let him give to him that hath none." Publicans and soldiers came to him: he did not tell them to renounce their profession, but only that they were to respect justice.

Those whom his words had touched confessed their sins and received from him a baptism of penitence which prepared them for the kingdom of God. The most zealous became his disciples, sharing his life and learning from him how to pray and to fast.

This religious activity did not last a year;<sup>10</sup> but it left a very deep and enduring impression. Two years later, in the last days of the life of Jesus, the Pharisees did not dare to maintain that John's baptism was from man, and not from God; "If we say so, the whole people will stone us" (*Luke* xx, 6). The story of Apollos and the Johannites of Ephesus (*Acts* xviii, 24; xix, 7) shows that John's influence persisted for long after his death, and extended to people who knew nothing of Christianity.<sup>11</sup>

This powerful movement which took place at the beginning of

<sup>10</sup> John's preaching began in the fifteenth year of Tiberius, shortly before the baptism of Jesus (*Luke* iii, 1). Three or four months after this baptism, John was thrown into prison (*Matt.* iv, 12).

<sup>11</sup> The insistence with which the apostolic preaching points out John's office as forerunner and witness to Jesus (*Acts* xiii, 25; *John* i, 8, 20, 26-7) shows the danger still present at that date, at least in certain circles, of recognising John only and of forgetting Jesus. Already in John's lifetime the jealousy of some of his disciples was a forecast of this danger (*John* iii, 26).

Christianity was directed by John towards Jesus: he himself was the Forerunner, and wanted to be only that.<sup>12</sup> This praiseworthy unselfishness was manifested, as we have seen, in the preaching of the Baptist; it was still more manifest when Jesus came back to the Jordan and John gave decisive testimony to Him, and transferred to Him his best disciples.

### *The Baptism of Jesus*

Amongst the crowd which pressed around him, John noticed one day a man whom he knew not, but whose holiness struck him at once. This was Jesus of Nazareth: "I ought to be baptised by thee, and comest thou to me?" the Baptist cried. Jesus answered: "Suffer it to be so now. For so it becometh us to fulfil all justice." John gave way; Jesus went down into the water, and received baptism. As He came out of the water, He saw the heavens open, and the Spirit descend on Him as a dove, and a voice from heaven was heard, saying: "Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased" (*Mark i, 10-11*).

This divine manifestation was the first public revelation of Jesus. Born of the Virgin Mary at Bethlehem, worshipped by a few shepherds, by Simeon and Anna in the Temple, and by the Magi, our Lord was, after a short exile in Egypt, taken while still quite a child by Joseph and Mary to Nazareth. It was there He had grown up, and yet no one in the little town or even amongst His relatives had divined the mystery known only to Mary and Joseph. In the eyes of all He was a carpenter and the son of a carpenter: that was all that was known of Him. Now He was thirty years old. He was about to begin His public ministry; the Heavenly Father bestowed His testimony upon his beloved Son, the object of His good pleasure, and the Holy Spirit descended visibly upon Him.

This revelation, like the most important manifestations in the life of Jesus,<sup>13</sup> was perceived only by a few witnesses.<sup>14</sup> The first to be enlightened was the Forerunner: "I knew him not," he says

<sup>12</sup> Such was the office which the Archangel Gabriel gave to John in his message to Zachary (*Luke i, 17*), and Zachary himself in his Canticle (*Luke i, 76*).

<sup>13</sup> Thus the Transfiguration had only three witnesses, and was kept secret until the death and resurrection of Jesus (*Mark ix, 9*). The Resurrection itself was witnessed not by the whole people but by those whom God had chosen beforehand (*Acts x, 41*).

<sup>14</sup> Cf. *Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ*, Vol. I, p. 44.

soon afterwards, "but he who sent me to baptise with water, said to me: 'He upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining upon him, he it is that baptiseth with the Holy Ghost.' And I saw, and I gave testimony, that this is the Son of God" (*John* i, 33-34).

But it was above all to Jesus Himself that the voice was addressed; the well-beloved Son experienced the infinite sweetness of the good pleasure of His Father; He also felt the force of the Spirit which descended upon Him and sent Him forth upon His mission.

### *The Temptation*

It was to the desert first of all that the Holy Spirit led Jesus. On the wild slopes which descend from the plateau of Judea towards the deep valley of the Jordan, alone amongst the animals, Christ passed forty days and forty nights in prayer and fasting. After these forty days of fast, He was hungry; the tempter approaching said to Him: "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." "Not in bread alone doth man live," Jesus replied, "but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God." Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, and set Him upon the pinnacle of the Temple, and said to Him: "If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down, for it is written, 'He hath given his angels charge over thee, and in their hands shall they bear thee up, lest perhaps thou dash thy foot against a stone.'" Jesus said to him: "It is written again: 'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.'" Again the devil took Him up into a very high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, and said to Him: "All these will I give thee, if falling down thou wilt adore me." Then Jesus saith to Him: "Begone, Satan, for it is written: 'The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and him only shalt thou serve.'" Then the devil left Him, and angels came and ministered to Him (*Matthew* iv, 2-11).

This temptation had no other witness besides Jesus, and if He narrated it to His disciples it must have been because He regarded it as an instruction, and for the same reason the evangelists have narrated it with such care. For the incident is, as it were, a prologue to the Gospel history, and, we might even say, to the whole history of the Church. The battle fought by Christ and Christians "is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers,



against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places" (*Ephes.* vi, 12). We also gather from this first conflict to what end the efforts of Satan are going to be directed: to the spiritual kingdom of God, which Jesus has come to institute, the tempter opposes a kingdom altogether earthly, a banquet, a universal domination, accompanied by brilliant prodigies. Jesus could not be led astray by these dreams, but did not His hearers, and the Apostles themselves, run the risk of being deceived by them? The history of Christ's ministry, His successes, brilliant indeed but fragile also until His death, His failures, and lastly, the supreme crisis of His Passion, bring out with painful evidence the danger of these temptations. Jesus triumphed over them finally only by His death.

### *The First Disciples*

John the Baptist, doubtless because of the threat involved in the ill will of the Jews of Jerusalem, had passed over the Eastern bank of the Jordan into Perea, and was baptising at Bethany. Jesus went there. John said, when he perceived him: "Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world!" The next day there was a similar meeting, and the same testimony. There stood close to John two of his disciples, John<sup>15</sup> and Andrew; moved by the testimony of the Baptist, they left him and followed Jesus. The next day, Andrew took his brother Simon to Jesus, who called him Peter, and the day after that Philip was won, and he brought Nathaniel in his turn.<sup>16</sup> This first call by Christ is narrated by the evangelist St. John with a charming freshness of memory. The historian also finds this of great interest: in reading it he gets a better understanding of the second calling on the borders of the lake: those whom Jesus then called finally belonged to Him already; when the time came, He took them away from their families and their boats: they were now His men. This first calling also brings out the importance of the office of the Forerunner: six<sup>17</sup> of

<sup>15</sup> Here, as in all his gospel, John does not name himself, but he describes himself sufficiently clearly.

<sup>16</sup> Nathaniel was from Cana in Galilee; he bears this name only in St. John's Gospel (i, 47, and xxi, 2). He is identified with great probability with the Apostle Bartholomew.

<sup>17</sup> James the son of Zebedee is not named in the account in St. John, who is always reserved where his own person or family is concerned; but it is very likely that the two brothers were together then as always.

the twelve Apostles, and these the most important, were chosen by Jesus from the group of the disciples of the Baptist, and the first invitation was given by John the Baptist himself: from that day his whole delight was to see Jesus increase, and himself decrease (*John* iii, 30).

### *Christ's Ministry, and Its Aim*

Near the Jordan, Jesus called his first disciples, and it was then that He began to preach and to act. A problem here presents itself to the historian: did Jesus have a clearly defined plan, and did He follow this in his public ministry?

One feature of this plan is manifest, and very clearly marked: until His death, Jesus limited His ministry to the children of Israel;<sup>18</sup> pressed by the Canaanite woman, He put her off, saying: "I was not sent but to the sheep that are lost of the house of Israel" (*Matt.* xv, 24). He had already laid down the same limits when sending the Apostles on their mission: "Go ye not into the way of the Gentiles, and into the city of the Samaritans enter ye not. But go ye rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (*Matt.* x, 5-6). We have already remarked when describing the state of Palestine in the time of Christ that these pagan and Samaritan towns were scattered all over the land of Israel, and if any did not enter them, it was because they intended to avoid them.

This reserve appears still more clearly in the exceptions which it allowed, and which were granted only for pressing reasons. The centurion of Capharnaum did not dare to go to Jesus himself, but had his request presented by Jews, who recommended him as a benefactor of their nation: "He is worthy that thou shouldst do this for him, for he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue" (*Luke* vii, 5).

The Canaanite woman, at first sent away by the Apostles and put off by Jesus, obtained only by her persistence the miracle which she sought (*Matt.* xv). The Greeks who came to Jerusalem for the Pasch and who wanted to see Jesus, did not dare to accost him directly; they timidly expressed their desire to Philip, "who was of

<sup>18</sup> Cf. J. Lebreton, *Des origines de la mission chrétienne*, in *Histoire générale comparée des Missions* of Baron Descamps, Brussels, 1932, pp. 15-103, especially pp. 52 et seq.

Bethsaida of Galilee"; Philip told Andrew, and the two presented the request to Jesus (*John* xii, 20-22).

Doubtless this reserve was not absolute or final. Jesus already made this understood in connection with the incidents we have just recalled. To the Greeks He replied by this prophecy: "The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified. Amen, amen I say to you, unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, itself remaineth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. . . . And I, if I be lifted up from the world, will draw all men to myself."<sup>19</sup> This universal fecundity was promised to Christ's ministry, but was gathered to Him only by His death. The grain of wheat had to fall to the ground and die; Jesus had to be lifted up on the cross. After His Passion, all the barriers fell down, and there was no limit to the mission of the Apostles: "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. Going therefore teach ye all nations. . . ." (*Matt.* xxviii, 18-20).<sup>20</sup>

This triumphant expansion will be set forth in the history of the Apostles. We shall then point out that it was the will of Jesus which sent them through the world, and that it was His death which secured the wonderful fruitfulness of their activity. But during the two and a half years of the Lord's ministry,<sup>21</sup> the Jews alone, with a few very rare exceptions, were the hearers of His discourses and the beneficiaries of His miracles.

This feature of Christ's mission being understood, can we go further, and discover in His ministry to the Jews a plan drawn up in advance and followed out by Him? If we study the gospel narratives, and especially the earliest, this plan is not evident at first sight: we rather have the impression of a series of preachings and miracles, arising out of chance circumstances or rather Divine Providence, but not at all due to a deliberate plan, tracing out a

<sup>19</sup> *John* xii, 23-32. The same perspective appears in the other episodes mentioned above. Thus to the Canaanite woman Christ says, "Suffer first the children to be filled," which implies that after them the pagans will have their turn. And in connection with the centurion of Capharnaum: "Amen, I say to you, I have not found so great faith in Israel. And I say to you that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into the exterior darkness" (*Matt.* xiii, 10-12).

<sup>20</sup> On the universal expansion of Christianity and Jesus' intention on this point, cf. M. Meinertz, *Jesus und die Heidenmission*, 2nd edn., Münster, 1925.

<sup>21</sup> On the length of Our Lord's ministry, see E. F. Sutcliffe, S. J., *A Two-Year Public Ministry*, Burns & Oates, 1939, 7s. 6d. (note by translator).

path mapped out by Jesus from the beginning. The evangelisation of Galilee by Christ and His Apostles would rather resemble the preaching of the first disciples of St. Francis through Italy and the world.

But a more careful reading leads us to see that this first impression is due above all to the manner of composition of the early Christian catechesis, which cared little for chronology, and was much more attentive to the religious import of each episode than to the connection or progress of the different phases in the ministry of Jesus. We very soon note another cause of this apparent confusion: the plan foreseen and adopted by Jesus may indeed be little evident in the early narratives, but it was in Christ's own life-time upset and broken by the constant opposition of His enemies. The reading of St. John enables us to reconstitute the original plan of the Master, at least in its main outline: He aimed at the conquest of Israel, and primarily of Jerusalem the capital, the Holy City, whose adhesion or opposition would be decisive. This plan, adopted at the beginning and returned to several times in spite of an obstinate opposition, finally collapsed before the irreducible hostility of the Jews and especially of their leaders. And then another plan appeared: Israel had not been won, and it would not be as a whole the missionary people it should have been, but from it Jesus would draw a faithful élite, the little group of Apostles and disciples which would form the hierarchy of the Church and would conquer the world.

### *Jesus at Jerusalem and in Judea*

Leaving the Jordan, Jesus returned to Galilee; it was only a short journey to Cana or Capharnaum. When the Pasch came round He went up to Jerusalem and there made His first effort. After His resurrection, He was to instruct His Apostles to remain at Jerusalem and there wait for the descent of the Holy Ghost (*Acts i, 4*), and these Galileans, whom nothing called to Jerusalem, would indeed stay there, obedient to the will of the Master, and conscious of the object in view: Jerusalem was the religious centre of Israel, and everything depended on it. Jesus knew that from the first, and accordingly went there, and the blow that He struck re-echoed through all Jewry: in the midst of the feast of the Pasch, in the sight of all the pilgrims, He expelled the merchants from the

Temple.<sup>22</sup> His most striking miracles were usually brought about by external circumstances, the supplications of the sick, or the needs of the people. But the expulsion of the merchants was a spontaneous act of authority and of religion. As Messiah and Son of God, Jesus was jealous for the holiness of the Temple: "The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up"; this sacred oracle (*Psalms* lxix, 10) came back to the memory of the disciples, and it reveals indeed the sentiment which inspired Jesus; during the long years of His hidden life He had suffered this scandal in silence, now He acted authoritatively, as Messiah.

During these feasts He performed miracles; many Jews were astonished at them, and believed in Him, but with a fragile faith. Jesus was not deceived: "he knew what was in man" (*John* ii, 25). The crowds at Jerusalem appeared in this first contact what they were to remain until Jesus' death: impressionable, rapidly won by the miracles or the words of the Master, but giving Him only a precarious and timid adhesion, shaken by the least incident, and disturbed by the opposition of their leaders.

These leaders were chiefly the Pharisees, who "sat in the seat of Moses." They imposed their authority upon the people, and each one watched the others. These "companions," as they called themselves, were, as it were, chained together. Christ could say to them: "How can you believe, who receive glory from one another, and the glory which is from God alone you do not seek?" (*John* v, 44).

During this first stay of Jesus at Jerusalem, one of these masters of Israel, Nicodemus, came to find Him, but at night-time, in secrecy. Jesus had a long conversation with him. From the outset, He taught him that to see the Kingdom of God a rebirth is necessary: these are spiritual things which can be understood only by those who are born of the spirit.

Nicodemus became a faithful disciple of Christ (*John* vii, 50, xix, 39). At his first visit he appears to have been timid, and to have remained such even when he intervened in the Sanhedrin in favour of Jesus, but the death of the Master strengthened his courage, and he followed his Lord to the tomb.

This gives us an example of something which appears rarely in

<sup>22</sup> This purification of the Temple is referred by the Synoptics to the last week in the life of Jesus; St. John, on the other hand, puts it at the very beginning of the public ministry. It is in that period that we must place it, and it does not seem necessary to admit a twofold purification. Cf. *Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ*, Vol. I, p. 54 n.

the evangelical narrative: individual conversions. There were in particular at Jerusalem some isolated disciples, sometimes unknown to the Apostles themselves, as seems to have been the case with the master of the house in which the Last Supper was celebrated (*Mark* xix, 13). The timidity of these converts and the discretion of the Master are easily understandable when we remember that during the last months of the life of Jesus, anyone who confessed to being His disciple was put under the ban of the synagogue.

We are still in the first weeks of the Ministry of Jesus. At this date the persecution has not yet broken out, but it can be foreseen. The Master had to leave Jerusalem, but at first He remained in Judea (*John* iii, 22). He preached, His disciples baptised, and soon the concourse of people round Him was so great that there was consternation in those who followed John the Baptist: "Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond the Jordan, to whom thou gavest testimony, behold he baptiseth, and all men come to him." But the Forerunner was incapable of jealousy: "You yourselves do bear me witness that I said 'I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him.' He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, who standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth with joy because of the bridegroom's voice. This my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease" (*John* iii, 28-30).

This testimony, so full of humility and love, was the last homage given by John to Jesus, the last gleam of the one who had been "a bright and shining light," whom imprisonment was to conceal, and soon death would extinguish. Herod Antipas, whom he rebuked for his adulterous union with Herodias, caused him to be arrested and imprisoned in the dungeons of Machaerus. Jesus himself felt no longer safe: He knew that the Pharisees were alarmed at the success of His preaching: they were saying that He had made more disciples even than John had made. He accordingly departed from Judea, and went through Samaria back to Galilee.

Thus this first attempt to gain the heart of Judaism failed: Jesus' preaching and His miracles attracted and moved many of the Jews, but the majority had only a wavering faith which could not resist the pressure of the Pharisees. Christ indeed did not abandon either Jerusalem or Judea for ever; more than once He would again essay to convert them, but then He would no longer be alone or surrounded by just a handful of disciples: He would be supported

by all those whom He had won in Galilee, and who were gathered round Him at Jerusalem on the occasion of the great festivals of Tabernacles, the Dedication, and the Pasch. It was above all during the last six months of His life that Jesus was to make these decisive efforts, but even then He did not succeed in gathering and retaining around Him the children of Jerusalem as a hen gathers its chickens under its wings.

### *Jesus in Galilee*

Galilee was to be for more than a year<sup>23</sup> the centre of the ministry of Jesus; his action there could not have on the whole of Judaism the influence which it would have had at Jerusalem, but it was less opposed there. Though the Pharisees were numerous in Galilee as everywhere in Palestine, they were not so strongly organised as at Jerusalem, where the Sanhedrin extended over the teaching in the synagogues and on the whole of religious life a daily supervision which very soon became tyrannical. The Sadducees, who had to take the initiative and the direction of the judicial steps against Jesus, were powerful at Jerusalem, but outside Judea had only a distant and occasional influence. The population of Galilee, less confined than that of Jerusalem, less involved in political intrigues, was more rustic and more violent, but more straightforward and more simple. When we remember the timid *démarche* of Nicodemus coming in the night time to find Jesus, and compare him with the immense crowds of people pressing to hear the Sermon on the Mount, or following Jesus into the desert, we realise that the Gospel, which the atmosphere of Jerusalem threatened to stifle, could expand freely in the fields of Galilee.

Very soon, nevertheless, this development, so full of promise, was to be hindered, and then crushed: that would be the work of emissaries from Jerusalem, but their tactics would meet with ample support from the passions of the Galilean crowds. In this frontier province, the Jews had been compelled in the time of Simon the

<sup>23</sup> According to the chronology we have set forth above (p. 85, n. 8) Jesus received the baptism of John in the first days of A.D. 28; after the forty days passed in the desert He returned to the Jordan, and after a short stay at Cana and Capharnaum, He went up to Jerusalem for the Pasch; He remained only a few weeks in Judea. In May He passed through Samaria and went to Galilee; He remained there during the whole of the following year. (But see Fr. Sutcliffe's work mentioned on p. 92, n. 21—Tr.)

Machabee to give place to the pagans and to leave the country; they returned in force and endeavoured to regain the mastery. Towards this end all their forces were directed. "Surrounded by so many foreign races," writes Josephus,<sup>24</sup> "they have to keep a perpetual look-out; they are warlike from their childhood." In Galilee more than elsewhere the preaching of the Kingdom of God ran the risk of arousing a nationalist echo which would give it a wrong direction. We shall not be surprised to see the Galileans after the first multiplication of the loaves, trying to put Jesus at their head and to make him king. Jesus withdrew from their homage, and their spirits were so sadly disillusioned by this fact that for the most part their faith vanished with their dreams.

This great crisis came about towards the Pasch of the year 29, and was a foretaste of the very similar but decisive defection which was to follow the triumphal entry in Jerusalem, and would end on Calvary.

Jesus had all this future before His eyes when He began to pass through the country of Galilee, preaching, healing and converting. He knew well that His work would be that of a sower, and that the seed would fall to the ground and die there, but He also knew that it would germinate, and that the Apostles would gather up the fruits.

### *The Preaching of the Kingdom of God*

He preached. In the early days, He took up the theme constantly developed by John the Baptist: "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" (*Matt.* iv, 17), but to this He added the decisive words: "The time is accomplished" (*Mark* i, 15). This cry had been awaited long since with a great and ardent desire, and often with a fever which could soon be exalted and impatient, but could equally speedily be discouraged. It should have been welcomed with enthusiasm, but on the contrary, it was hardly believed. The news was too good to be true, and then again, the Kingdom of Heaven did not change everything as one had hoped, but it mingled itself with and became one with one's daily life. The seed is put in the ground and will germinate there; the leaven is mixed with the paste and will make it rise, but this activity is still invisible: faith alone can detect it, illumined by the words of

<sup>24</sup> *Wars of the Jews*, III, 3, 2, 42.



Jesus. And so people hesitated to believe in it. Much later, towards the end of the Lord's ministry, this unbelief was to show itself in an incident narrated by St. Luke (xvii, 20-21): "Being asked by the Pharisees when the Kingdom of God should come, He answered them and said: 'The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation; neither shall they say: Behold here, or behold there. For lo, the Kingdom of God is amongst you.'"

Those who were the most ready to receive this modest preaching of a humble and gentle Messiah were the little ones and the poor: "I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones. Yea, Father, for so it hath seemed good in thy sight" (*Luke* x, 21). But these privileged ones, these little ones, themselves understood only imperfectly their good fortune. Jesus had to emphasise it: "Turning to his disciples, he said, 'Blessed are the eyes that see the things which you see. For I say to you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see the things that you see and have not seen them, and to hear the things that you hear and have not heard them'" (*ibid.*, 23-24). The Apostles themselves would arrive only gradually at a deeper understanding of the words of Jesus as the Holy Ghost recalled these words to them and revealed their meaning (*John* xiv, 26), and the whole Church would have to meditate upon our Lord's teaching until the last day, in order gradually to penetrate its mystery.

### *The Apostles*

We have just mentioned the Apostles. From the commencement of the preaching in Galilee, Jesus called them to Him and attached them to His mission:

"Passing by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother, casting nets into the sea (for they were fishermen). And Jesus said to them: Come after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. And immediately leaving their nets they followed him. And going on from thence a little farther, he saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were mending their nets in the ship. And forthwith he called them. And leaving their father Zebedee in the ship with his hired men, they followed him" (*Mark* i, 16-20).

After this first group of four Apostles, eight others were called: Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas and Matthew, James the son of

Alphaeus, Lebbaeus, Simon, and Judas Iscariot. This list is given four times in the New Testament.<sup>25</sup> Judas Iscariot is always the last to be named, and St. Peter always the first. St. Matthew says expressly: "The names of the twelve apostles are these: the first, Simon who is called Peter. . . ."

This choice came from the free initiative of Christ: "He called unto him whom he would himself" (*Mark* iii, 13). On the last day of his life, Jesus reminded them of this: "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you" (*John* xv, 16). He chose twelve, because they were to evangelise the twelve tribes of Israel, and to judge them on the last day (*Matt.* x, 28). The first mission of the Apostles, as we have already said, was only to Israel, like the preaching of Jesus Himself; but later on the Twelve were to be sent to "all nations," and St. John contemplates in heaven, together with the elect of the twelve tribes, "a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues" (*Apoc.* vii, 9).

From the beginnings of the ministry of Jesus, these twelve Apostles chosen by Him, grouped around Him and constantly following Him, already warn us of His design: the foundation of the Church, a visible and hierarchical society, of which they will be the heads and the pastors, and at their head "the first, Simon, who is called Peter." This design becomes more precise and determined as time goes on: when Our Lord preaches in parables, the Apostles are the only recipients of an interpretation which the multitude does not hear, and this they are later on to make known to all, crying on the housetops what was whispered into their ears. Then we have their first mission: they go forth in twos, preaching the kingdom of God, healing the sick, raising the dead, cleansing the lepers, casting out devils (*Matt.* x, 7). Next we have at Cæsarea Philippi the confession of St. Peter, and the reply of Christ conferring upon him the primacy:

"Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona: because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I say to thee: That thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the

<sup>25</sup> *Matt.* x, 2-4; *Mark* iii, 16-19; *Luke* vi, 14-16; *Acts* i, 13. This list can be analysed into three groups of four Apostles; in each group the first name is always the same. The three others are always found in the same group, but the order is not constant.

keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven" (*Matt. xvi, 17-19*).<sup>26</sup>

Then the other Apostles, in their turn, receive the power of binding and loosing (*Matt. xviii, 18*), and at the Last Supper they will be given the power to consecrate the body of Christ (*Luke xxii, 19*). After His resurrection, Jesus will confirm all these privileges, saying to the Apostles: "Receive the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained" (*John xx, 23*), and to Peter in particular: "Feed my lambs, feed my sheep" (*John xxi, 16-17*); and finally on the occasion of the solemn appearance on the mountain of Galilee, He will say to the eleven: "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. Going therefore, teach ye all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world" (*Matt. xxviii, 18-20*).

We have had to anticipate in the account of these events in order to give to the institution of the Apostles all its significance. The matter is indeed of supreme importance: at the beginning of a history of the Church it must first of all be pointed out that Jesus founded the Church, and that He gave to it from the first certain essential features. The Church is a society vivified by Christ who is its Head, and by the Holy Spirit who is its soul, but it also appears from the very first as a visible and hierarchical society, which will rest on St. Peter as an unshakable foundation, will depend on him as its supreme head here below, will be taught and governed under him by the Apostles, and will be aided constantly by Jesus Christ until the end of the world.

### *Jesus at Capernaum*

When Jesus began the evangelisation of Galilee, He did not fix his headquarters in the little town of Nazareth where he had grown up. Later on He would go and preach there, and be faced with the unbelief of his fellow citizens: "A prophet is not without honour but in his own country, and in his own house, and among

<sup>26</sup> On this text, see *Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ*, Vol. I, pp. 355-6, and the works there referred to.

his own kindred," said He to them. This unbelief strongly opposed Him: the people of Nazareth turned Him out of the synagogue where he was preaching, and tried to cast Him down from the top of the hill on which their town was built.<sup>27</sup>

At a day's journey from Nazareth, on the northern side of the Lake of Galilee, there was the little town of Capharnaum. This was not a Hellenic city like Tiberias or Julias, but a Jewish town. At the same time, it was quite open to strangers: some came from the rich plateaux of the Hauran, others from the Phœnician coast. It was in this busy town, amidst the numerous publicans<sup>28</sup> gathered there for the receipt of taxes, that Jesus, passing near the table where Levi was sitting, called him and made him an Apostle (*Matt.* ix, 9-13). It was also there that he found the rich centurion, the friend of the Jews, who had built them a synagogue.<sup>29</sup>

It was in this town of Capharnaum that St. Peter had married; Jesus was given hospitality there and remained there in the intervals between His missions through Galilee. During the whole of this period, Capharnaum was His city (*Matt.* ix, 1).

The evangelists, and especially St. Mark, the interpreter of the memoirs of St. Peter, enable us to accompany Jesus in one of His daily rounds (*Mark* i, 21-34). It was a Sabbath day; in the morning, Jesus went to the synagogue; "He taught them, and they were astonished at his doctrine, for he was teaching them as one having power, and not as the scribes." There was present a man possessed by an unclean spirit, who cried out: "What have we to do with thee, Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know who thou art, the Holy One of God." Jesus commanded him: "Speak no more, and go out of the man!" And after a convulsion and a great cry, the devil went out. The crowd was amazed; "What thing is this? What is this new doctrine? For with power he commandeth even the unclean spirits, and they obey him!"

Protected by the Sabbath repose, Jesus withdrew. Peter and Andrew took Him to their home. They were followed by their

<sup>27</sup> *Mark* vi, 1-6; *Luke* iv, 16-30.

<sup>28</sup> *Luke* v, 29, mentions "a great company of publicans" around Levi. Cf. *Mark* ii, 15; *Matt.* ix, 10.

<sup>29</sup> At Tell-Hum, the ancient Capharnaum, the ruins of a very fine synagogue have been discovered. They have been described by P. G. Orfali, *Capharnaum et ses ruines*, Paris, 1922. According to P. Orfali, this synagogue dates back to the first century of our era; according to Père Lagrange, *Gospel of Jesus Christ*, Vol. I, p. 162 n., it belonged to the end of the second century.

friends and fellow fishermen, James and John; the four first Apostles thus passed the day with the Master. Peter's mother-in-law was ill: Jesus cured her. This new miracle redoubled the excitement in the little town: as soon as sunset had brought the Sabbath to a close, "they brought to him all that were ill and that were possessed with devils. And all the city was gathered together at the door. And he healed many that were troubled with divers diseases, and he cast out many devils, and he suffered them not to speak, because they knew him."

And after this day of teaching and working miracles, spent wholly with the Apostles and the multitude, Jesus "rising very early went out into a desert place, and there he prayed" (*ibid.*, 25). Prayer was His repose. But He was not able to enjoy it for long: "Simon and they that were with him, followed after him, and when they had found him, they said to him: 'All seek for thee.' And he saith to them: Let us go into the neighbouring towns and cities, that I may preach there also, for to this purpose am I come. And he was preaching in their synagogues and in all Galilee, and casting out devils" (*ibid.*, 37-39).

Such was henceforth the life of Jesus: accompanied always by the Apostles, with the crowd pressing upon Him and following Him, He no longer belonged to Himself: His miracles drew to Him all those who were sick, His teaching attracted all those who were athirst for the word of God, and who for the first time recognised its sound upon human lips. This Master was so different from the Scribes. That was the impression of the people of Capharnaum, as also of those who heard Christ on the Mountain (*Matt.* vii, 28-29), and it is experienced still to-day by every reader of the Gospel.

### *Jesus in the Synagogues*

Jesus preached by preference in the synagogues; there He would find the Jews assembled together to pray to God, and to hear and comment upon the readings from the Pentateuch and the prophets. So long as the break with the Jewish authorities was not complete, He was invited to give a homily. The preaching at Nazareth, narrated with such detail by St. Luke (iv, 16-30), puts before our eyes this touching scene: Jesus took up the Book of Isaias, and read from it:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. Wherefore he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the contrite of heart, to preach deliverance to the captives, and sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of reward."

He closed the book, gave it back to the minister, and sat down. All eyes in the synagogue were fastened upon Him. He began to speak: "To-day is fulfilled this scripture in your ears."

We cannot read this page without once more feeling some emotion. But what must have been that of the hearers! They had so often repeated the complaint of the psalmist: "Lord, where are thy ancient mercies, to which thou didst swear to David in thy truth?" (*Psalms* lxxxviii, 50), and now they heard this majestic voice: "To-day this scripture is fulfilled!"

As long as Jesus was able, He preached in the synagogues and in the Temple, as He affirmed on the last day of His life before the High Priest (*John* xviii, 20). More than once the hatred of His enemies caused His expulsion; more often still the concourse of hearers obliged Him to leave the narrow walls of the synagogue and to preach in the open air, sitting on the mountain side (*Matt.* v, 1) or in the desert (*Mark* vi, 35), or in Peter's boat, while the crowd was massed on the edge of the lake (*Matt.* xiii, 2).

Of these long discourses many have not been recorded for us;<sup>30</sup> but the evangelists describe the preaching of the Master in sufficient detail to enable us to grasp His method of teaching and the progressive development of His doctrine.

What impressed the multitude in the first place was, as we have said, the authority with which Jesus spoke. The Scriptural commentary as set forth by the Scribes was usually a scholastic discussion, encumbered with the contradictory testimonies of the elders, exegetical subtleties, and the requirements or concessions of a wholly human casuistry. There was nothing of that sort here: a simple, direct speech, imposing itself authoritatively as the very word of God, and going straight to the conscience. Its appeal was an intimate one, it penetrated to the centre of the soul, but it never shocked it: it set forth to human life the highest moral ideal, the very perfection of God, but it did so without effort, or excited

<sup>30</sup> E.g. the preaching in the desert, before the first multiplication of the loaves: St. Matthew does not mention it; St. Mark says: "he began to teach them many things"; St. Luke: "he spoke to them of the kingdom of God."

speech: the Master did not have to raise Himself up to those heights: He lived there: "You are from beneath, I am from above" (*John* viii, 23).

### *The Sermon on the Mount*

It is above all in the Sermon on the Mount <sup>31</sup> that we can grasp this characteristic in the teaching of Jesus: less reserved than in the parables, less intimate than in the discourse after the Last Supper, it is so limpidly clear and deep that we can never grow weary of studying it.

It begins with the beatitudes: <sup>32</sup> the poor, the afflicted, the meek, those who hunger and thirst after justice, the merciful, the pure, the peacemakers, the persecuted—these are the blessed ones, and it is to them that the Kingdom of God belongs.

To some modern readers this preaching has the appearance of a paradox, beautifying all that is painful and humiliating here below. This was not the impression made on the hearers of Jesus: they were not shocked by His teaching, but won by it; the best in them responded to His doctrine. They doubtless felt themselves led beyond their familiar ideas, but it was towards an ideal which they had already thought of and loved: this poor and humble life, in which the soul is gentle and the heart at peace, was often praised in

<sup>31</sup> This Sermon is found in *Matt.* v-vii and *Luke* vi, 20-49. These two versions are notably different, and yet the identity of the two sermons seems beyond doubt. St. Matthew has inserted into it teaching given on other occasions by Jesus, such as the teaching of the Our Father (vi, 9) related by St. Luke (xi. 2-4) in quite different circumstances. We recognise here one of the characteristics of the method of the first evangelist, who deliberately groups together in one logical scheme sentences or incidents which explain one another, although they belong to different periods in the ministry of Christ. This editorial method must not make us lose sight of the fundamental unity of the sermon. Cf. *Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ*, Vol. I, p. 126.

<sup>32</sup> Here especially we find a difference in editing between Matthew and Luke: Matthew has eight beatitudes, and understands them plainly in the spiritual sense: "Blessed are the poor in spirit. . ." Luke has only four beatitudes, and seems at first sight to beatify a material condition: "Blessed are you poor . . ." These four beatitudes are followed by four anathemas, which are lacking in Matthew. Again, in the first evangelist, the form is sententious; in the other it is direct: the sermon, instead of addressing itself to the whole human race, directly affects the "little flock" of poor, hungry and persecuted disciples. These differences can be explained by the fact that Our Lord's discourses, before being inserted into the Gospel, had often been reproduced in the Christian catechesis, and in many forms. One of these recensions is reproduced by St. Matthew, another by St. Luke. Cf. *Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ*, Vol. I, p. 127.

the Psalms. Isaias had shown its ideal model in the Servant of Jahveh. Now it is He Himself who comes, and in His life even more than in His teaching they recognise and love the ideal long since foreseen.

### *The New Law*

Next we have the fundamental question of the Old Law and the New. No case of conscience was graver or more pressing for the hearers of Christ. Nothing was more sacred to them than the Law, which was the Oracle of God. Nothing was dearer, for it was the privilege of Israel. And yet this law was heavy to bear, and Jesus more than once had given an example of a freer observance of the Sabbath, and of the distinction between pure and impure. In the presence of the scandalised Pharisees, he upheld this liberty, affirming that "the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath" (*Mark* ii, 27). He had also said that "no man seweth a piece of raw cloth to an old garment" or "putteth new wine into old bottles" (*ibid.*, 21-22). Soon afterwards he would say: "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man, but what cometh out of the mouth" (*Matt.* xv, 11).

How strange this sounds when we remember that the distinction between pure and impure food was so sacred for the Jews that in order to uphold it the martyrs had laid down their lives in the days of the Machabees (*II Mach.*, vi-vii).

Of the principles laid down by Jesus the applications were to appear only progressively, in the light of the Holy Spirit,<sup>33</sup> but already the Sermon on the Mount quietened the uneasiness of the Jews and showed them that the Gospel is not the abrogation but the accomplishment of the Law:

"Do not think that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For amen I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall not pass of the law, till all be fulfilled. He therefore that shall break one of these least commandments, and shall so teach men, shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven. But he that shall do and teach, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, that unless your justice

<sup>33</sup> The vision at Joppa was necessary to make St. Peter understand that he was no longer to regard as impure what God had purified (*Acts* x, 15).



abound more than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (*Matt.* v, 17-20).

We see already what the Gospel is going to give to the Law: a greater perfection, more intimate requirements. The part of the sermon that follows enables us the better to understand this. It is not only murder that is forbidden, but also anger in thought and word; not only adultery, but also evil desires. Divorce was tolerated by Moses, this toleration is suppressed; no more vain oaths, but the simplicity of a speech which is always sincere; no more vengeance or even resistance to evil: no more narrowness in charity, but the love of enemies after the example of the Heavenly Father, "who maketh his sun to shine upon the good and bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust. . . . Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect."

Henceforth in the moral and religious life all is sincere, all is deep. This is indeed a new and more intimate requirement, but at the same time it is a deliverance. No more regulated attitude or correct appearance masking evil desires, or whited sepulchre concealing a corpse; virtue springs forth quite spontaneously from the depths of life; it is this living water that Jesus promises to those who believe in Him.<sup>34</sup> Hence as the soul becomes stronger, it can lay aside all those precepts which protected its infancy as a hedge protects a young crop; the Christian will be able to say with St. Paul: "Now that I have become a man, I have put away the things of a child." And if he gives himself up wholly and without reserve to the requirements of Christ, he will realise that the multiplicity of precepts are reduced to unity: the love of God and of one's neighbour is the whole law and the prophets (*Matt.* xxii, 36), and he will find that all the powers of his soul are carried along by the simplicity of the divine life which inspires it. Truly the yoke of Christ is easy, and his burden light (*Matt.* xi, 30).

It is above all when he promulgates this Christian moral teaching, so exigent and so beneficial, that Jesus speaks with full independence and authority: he recalls the imperfect laws which the Jews had received from Moses: "It was said to you"; and he adds: "But I say to you. . . ." All readers, even the most distant from

<sup>34</sup> "He that believeth in me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (*John* vii, 38).

our faith, have felt the force of these antitheses.<sup>35</sup> Certainly no one who was not the author of the Law could treat it with at once more independence and more respect; the legislator had been able to give to a difficult people only a sketchy law; upon Christians, whom the Spirit is going to teach and fortify, the Master imposes, with his sovereign authority, a perfect law.

### *Interior Religion*

Then he carries on the religious formation of his disciples, leading them on towards a wholly internal righteousness, in the secret of a life which is witnessed only by the heavenly Father (*Matt.* vi, 1-18). Here above all the example of Jesus is even more pressing than his teaching: "He that sent me is with me and he hath not left me alone," "I do always the things that please him"; "my meat is to do the will of him that sent me, that I may perfect his work." There is, of course, in the Father and the Son a unity of nature to which we cannot attain, and even in the human nature of Jesus there is the beatific vision which raises him up irresistibly towards the Father and which we do not possess here below. But though all this surpasses us, it is, as it were, the ideal model to which we must unceasingly tend. The Master who has said to us: "Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect," has also said of us, addressing his Father: "That they may be one even as we are one, I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one."

In this teaching on internal religion and union with the heavenly Father, as in the preaching of the beatitudes, Jesus manifests Himself to us in and through His doctrine; more so than His first hearers, we who know Him better, realise that what He gives us here is the secret of His own life, and this life draws us more strongly still than His words. It is by this discreet revelation that He makes Himself henceforth known and loved. The imitation of Christ will be for all Christians from St. Paul onwards the supreme rule of morality; the Master, always anxious to efface Himself, will set forth this ideal model only towards the end of His life, and

<sup>35</sup> Thus Rabbi Klausner, *Jésus de Nazareth*, p. 545. Cf. W. Bousset, art. *Bergpredigt*, *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 1st edn., Vol. I, p. 1038: "This new spirit is manifested with the greatest force in these powerful antitheses. . . . Here he boldly sweeps away all the barriers. . . ."

above all at the Last Supper,<sup>36</sup> but already from the beginning of His ministry, His most faithful and clear-sighted disciples will be able to contemplate it in the transparency of His teaching.

Above all, there is the authority of His words: "It was said to them of old. . . . But I say to you. . . ." This sovereign dignity appears perhaps even better in the blessings attached to persecution: "Blessed are ye when they shall speak all that is evil against you, for my sake" (*Matt.* v, 11), and in the description of the Last Judgment: "Then will I profess unto them, 'I never knew you, depart from me, you that work iniquity'" (*Matt.* vii, 23). To sacrifice one's life for Jesus is eternal bliss; not to be recognised by Him is damnation.

It is thus that Jesus revealed Himself to the multitude of His disciples;<sup>37</sup> the superhuman greatness of His mission and His nature is manifested discreetly but very efficaciously in the doctrine in which it is implied: whoever recognises in Jesus the supreme legislator, the unique revealer of the Father, the master whose cause deserves every sacrifice, and promises every reward, the judge who will decide the fate of all—such a one has only to confess, with St. Peter: "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God."

But in order that this teaching may bear its fruit, it is not sufficient that the mind should understand it and be pleased with it: it is necessary that this doctrine should become the efficacious rule of our lives. That constitutes the concluding part of the sermon of Jesus:

"Everyone therefore that heareth these my words, and doth them, shall be likened to a wise man that built his house upon a rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and they beat upon that house, and it fell not, for it was founded on a rock.

"And everyone that heareth these my words, and doth them not, shall be like a foolish man that built his house upon the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and they beat upon that house, and it fell, and great was the fall thereof" (*Matt.* vii, 24-27).

At the time of the great crisis, when, in presence of an almost universal defection, Jesus says to the Apostles: "Will you also go

<sup>36</sup> *Mark* x, 45; *John* xiii, 15; xiii, 34; xv, 10; xv, 20.

<sup>37</sup> We find, especially in St. John, many more explicit declarations, but usually these revelations are made to a few isolated listeners, such as the Samaritan woman (*John* iv, 26), to the man born blind (ix, 37), or again were called forth by discussions with opponents (x, 25, 30).

away?" Peter replies: "To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life" (*John* vi, 68). Here we have the house built upon the rock, the rock against which the gates of hell shall not prevail, but what gives to this faith the firmness of a rock is the generous practice which has tested the words of Jesus and has recognised therein "the words of eternal life." Many admired the "words of grace" which proceeded from the mouth of Jesus (*Luke* iv, 22), many rejoiced in His light, but this admiration and joy were dissipated by the first storm. The most certain proof of the faith, and the one which gives it its unshakable firmness, is the fruits which it bears; but he only can taste these who has made his faith the rule of his life.

### *Jesus and the Pharisees*

The Sermon on the Mount, the first preaching of Jesus, aims above all at the moral formation of its hearers. Jesus wanted to make disciples of them, to lead them from the Law to the Gospel, from a formalist religion to one which was internal, living, and wholly in spirit and in truth. The Jews who were before Him, and who had flocked together not only from Galilee but "from Judea and Jerusalem, and the sea coast both of Tyre and Sidon" (*Luke* vi, 17), were still very ignorant and very imperfect, but they listened eagerly to His words, they were not yet, for the most part, prejudiced against Him. Jesus was able to speak to them in all freedom and sympathy. But already at this time the Pharisees were alarmed: they followed Jesus in order to watch Him, and very soon in order to oppose Him.

This opposition is described by St. Mark above all and by St. Luke when relating incidents which were connected together, and which show an increasing hostility. On the occasion of the miraculous cure of a paralytic (*Mark* ii, 1-12), the Scribes who were sitting in front of Jesus, in a house full of people, were scandalised at the words of the Master to the sick man: "Son, thy sins are forgiven thee." Internally they were in a state of revolt, but they kept silent. A little later, there came the calling of the publican Levi, and the banquet to which the latter had invited many of his colleagues and friends. The Scribes and Pharisees intervened: they did not yet dare to attack Jesus directly, but they questioned His disciples: "Why doth your master eat with publicans and sinners?"

Jesus hearing it said: "They that are in health need not a physician, but they that are ill. . . . I am not come to call the just, but sinners" (*Matt.* ix, 16-17). Then on a day when the disciples of John the Baptist and the Pharisees were fasting, they went to Jesus and asked, "Why do not thy disciples fast?" Jesus answered: "Can the children of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then they shall fast" (*ibid.*, 14-15). Another day, Jesus and His disciples were walking through a field of wheat and the disciples plucked a few ears and ate them. The Pharisees came up: according to the Law it was forbidden to gather the harvest on the Sabbath day. The Pharisees interpreted this prohibition so strictly that they would not allow "a branch, or a leaf, or a fruit" to be picked on that day.<sup>38</sup>

Jesus protested against this casuistry, and added: "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath" (*ibid.*, 28). On another Sabbath day Jesus was in a synagogue. Amongst those present there was a man with a withered hand; the Scribes and Pharisees were there, and they watched Jesus in order to accuse Him of violating the Sabbath if He should cure the infirm man. Jesus said to the latter: "Stand up in the midst," and then said to the Pharisees: "Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath day, or to do evil? to save life or to destroy?" They kept silent. Then He looked round on them with anger, being grieved for the blindness of their hearts, and He said to the man: "Stretch forth thy hand." He did so, and the hand was restored. The Pharisees, going out of the synagogue, immediately held a consultation with the Herodians as to how they might destroy Jesus (*Mark* iii, 1-6).

We are able to trace in these incidents the boldness of the Pharisees growing with their anger. The cure of the sick man upset them completely. The miracle was brought about by a word, and Jesus had not even touched the man. It would be very difficult to see in this a violation of the Sabbath. But the exasperation of the enemies of the Master was only the greater: already they were planning His death, they sought for accomplices, and found them amongst the Herodians.

<sup>38</sup> Philo, *De vita Mosis*, II, 4. The disciples were not criticised for injuring the owner of the field, for then, as now in the East, custom authorised passers-by to pluck a few ears or a few fruits.

They also endeavoured to calm the excitement of the people. Amongst the opponents of Jesus the more moderate said: "He is mad," and this rumour became so strong that the brethren of the Lord<sup>39</sup> were upset by it, and they came from Nazareth to Capharnaum to take Jesus away (*Mark* iii, 21, cf. 31). But the crowd was so dense around Jesus that they could not get to Him.<sup>40</sup> This crowd had come "from Galilee, and Judea, and from Jerusalem, and from Idumea, and from beyond the Jordan, and from Tyre and Sidon" (*Mark* iii, 7-8). They were so eager to see and touch Jesus that the Master was obliged to go up into a boat to get a little distance from them (iii, 9), and when He returned to the house, they did not give Him time even to eat (iii, 20). But in the midst of this enthusiastic multitude there were enemies: Scribes who had come down from Jerusalem continued to repeat: "He is possessed; if he casts out devils, it is by Beelzebub, the prince of devils."

This odious and ridiculous calumny was repeated with such insistence that Jesus had to rebut it. He called together these Scribes, and said to them: "How can Satan cast out Satan? . . . If Satan be risen up against himself, he is divided, and cannot stand, but hath an end" (*ibid.*, 23, 26). The Scribes made no answer—what could they have said without withdrawing their opinion? But they remained obdurate. Later on, at Jerusalem, the Jews who were under Pharisaic influence persisted in regarding Jesus as possessed.<sup>41</sup> That was indeed the blasphemy against the Spirit: these people recognised in Jesus a supernatural power; they were capable of seeing that this power destroyed and expelled Satan, and yet they insisted on attributing it to Satan himself. Against such bad faith God Himself is powerless, and His grace helpless: "Amen I say to you, that all sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and the

<sup>39</sup> Those whom the Gospel calls the "brethren of the Lord" were not children of Mary, who had decided to remain always a virgin (*Luke* i, 34), nor were they children of Joseph. In all the narratives of the infancy, we find with Mary and Joseph only one child, Jesus. The "brethren" were cousins. The Gospel names four of these: James, Joseph, Simon and Jude, and also mentions several sisters without naming them. Of these brethren two, James and Joseph, are described as sons of one of the holy women present at Calvary: "Mary, the mother of James and Joseph" (*Matt.* xxvii, 56; cf. *Mark* xv, 40). On this whole question of the relatives of Jesus, see *Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ*, Vol. I, pp. 32-7.

<sup>40</sup> On this action by the relatives of Jesus, see *Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ*, Vol. I, pp. 227 *et seq.*

<sup>41</sup> *John* vii, 20; viii, 48, 52, 20.

blasphemies wherewith they shall blaspheme. But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, shall never have forgiveness, but shall be guilty of an everlasting sin" (*Mark* iii, 28-29).

### *The Parables of the Kingdom of Heaven*

Jesus had already been preaching for some months. Now not only Galilee was moved by His words, but the whole land of Israel. To Him flocked the sick and the possessed, and souls eager for truth, but also, alas! some who were envious, and others who were enemies. The prophecy of Simeon was verified more and more: in respect of Jesus the contradiction became more and more violent; it divided into two contrary parties all the Jews, as it would later on divide all mankind. The calumnies of the scribes of Jerusalem were atrocious; doubtless people hesitated to give them full credence, but many minds were upset. Were not the Scribes the guides of the people, and the qualified interpreters of the Law? Instinctively people turned to them, and already we can say what the Pharisees were to say later to their agents troubled by the words of Jesus: "Hath any one of the rulers believed in him, or one of the Pharisees? But this multitude, that knoweth not the Law, are accursed" (*John* vii, 48-49). Already the timid ones, and these were as always numerous, were paralysed by this opposition on the part of the leaders. This will be seen later at Jerusalem, we feel it already in Galilee.

And yet to this divided and undecided crowd, Jesus must now preach the Kingdom of God and the Messias. Previous discourses, such as the Sermon on the Mount, should have prepared men's minds; it was now time to put before them the "mystery of the Kingdom of God." But this preaching ran the risk of being misunderstood: would not these Galilean crowds, so impatient to see the kingdom of Israel re-established, try to lead Him on to the great adventure, to force Him to put himself at their head, and to make Himself king?

These fears were only too well justified as the sequence of events show. Jesus, who "knew what was in man," recognised with clear certitude the dangers of such preaching, which nevertheless He could not delay any longer. To meet the danger, He presented the preaching of the Kingdom of God under the veil of parables. It was not the first time that He had spoken in parables: nothing was

more familiar to His audience than these figurative addresses, and He Himself had had recourse to them many times.<sup>42</sup> But prior to the period with which we are dealing, these parables were only short figurative sentences, giving more point to the discourse, but not constituting the essence of the preaching. Now, on the contrary, they are developed at length, and cover the whole teaching of Jesus. This gives His preaching a new aspect: the Apostles are struck by it, and ask Him why He has recourse to this method: "Why speakest thou to them in parables?" Jesus replies: "Because to you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given" (*Matt.* xiii, 10).

Certainly we must not infer from this that Jesus did not wish to instruct the Jews, or that the parables had no other aim but to blind them. St. John Chrysostom says very rightly: "If He did not wish the Jews to be saved, He had only to be silent; He had no need to speak in parables; He wanted, on the contrary, to stimulate them by the very obscurity of His words."

But it is true that the obscurity of His words was due to the blindness of His hearers, their tenacious prejudices, and their slowness to believe; and that is why the Apostles, themselves better disposed, received from Jesus an interpretation of the parables which enabled them to understand them better, and which was not set forth to the crowd. Here is verified the providential law of the distribution of grace: "He that hath, to him shall be given, and he shall abound: but he that hath not, from him shall be taken away that also which he hath."<sup>43</sup> It is by fidelity to the first graces from God that we dispose ourselves to receive more precious gifts from Him. We must also note the care which the Apostles take to interrogate the Master: conscious that they have imperfectly understood the parables, they ask from Him the interpretation of them, and receive it. "The Jews also," remarks St. John Chrysostom, "could have gone to Him, and have interrogated Him, as the disciples did, but they did not wish to do so, because they were lazy, and because they cast themselves away."

<sup>42</sup> Thus: "They that are well have no need of a physician" (*Mark* ii, 17); "Can the children of the bridegroom fast, as long as the bridegroom is with them?" (19); "No man seweth a piece of raw cloth to an old garment, . . . and no man putteth new wine into old bottles" (21).

<sup>43</sup> This sentence of the Master, reported in this place by St. Matthew (xiii, 12), is found again later on in the parable of the talents: *Matt.* xxv, 29, cf. *Mark* iv, 25; *Luke* viii, 18.



Jesus made use of this culpable carelessness of the Jews in order to prepare for the constitution of His Church, and to train the Apostles for their office as teachers. The knowledge of the kingdom of Heaven which He gives them is to be communicated to all:

"Doth a candle come in to be put under a bushel, or under a bed? and not to set on a candlestick? For there is nothing hid, which shall not be made manifest; neither was it made secret but that it may come abroad" (*Mark* iv, 21-22).

There is no esoteric doctrine in the Church, there are no secret initiations; certainly there are some to whom are entrusted the secrets of God, but these confidants are witnesses whose mission it is to make known to all what has been said to them: "That which I tell you in the dark, speak ye in the light; and that which you hear in the ear, preach ye upon the housetops."<sup>44</sup>

This general law becomes more and more manifest as we proceed in our reading of the Gospel: the most decisive manifestations in the life of Jesus, Cæsarea Philippi, the Transfiguration, and above all the Resurrection and the Ascension, had but few witnesses, but these had a mission to make them known to all.

These parables, clarified by the interpretation given by Jesus to the Apostles, have been graven into the Christian conscience, and the Church unceasingly reminds her children of them. The word of God is the seed which the sower casts on the wayside, where the birds of the air come and eat it, or it falls on stony ground, where the sun scorches it, or amongst thorns, which choke it, or lastly upon good ground, where it brings forth fruit, thirty, or sixty, or even a hundredfold (*Mark* iv, 3-9). The Kingdom of God is like to a seed which a man cast into the earth; he sleeps and rises, and the seed springs and grows up, he knows not how, and then, when the harvest is ready, he puts in his sickle (*ibid.*, iv, 26-29). A man sowed good seed in his field, his enemy came and sowed cockle, when the cockle appeared amongst the wheat,

<sup>44</sup> This sentence, connected with that which precedes, is included by St. Matthew (x, 27) in the instructions given by Jesus to the Apostles when He sent them out on a mission. At the end of the interpretation of the parables, He gives them the same teaching in another form: "Have ye understood all these things? . . . Therefore, every scribe instructed in the kingdom of heaven is like to a householder who bringeth forth out of his treasure new things and old" (*Matt.* xiii, 51-2).

the servants wanted to gather it up, but the master said to them: Suffer the wheat and the cockle to grow until the harvest (*Matt.* xiii, 24-30). The Kingdom of Heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, the least of all seeds, but from whence comes a great tree (*ibid.*, 31-32), or as leaven which a woman takes and hides in three measures of meal until the whole is leavened (*ibid.*, 33). It is like a treasure, or like a pearl of great price (*ibid.*, 44-45). Again it is like to a net cast into the sea and gathering good and evil fish (*ibid.*, 47-50).

What we notice first of all in this preaching is that it is a moral teaching which all its hearers were able to understand, and which was indeed necessary for all of them: the dispositions which the Kingdom of God requires in all those who aim at it are a boundless good will, determined to purchase the treasure, the pearl, at all costs; and the fruitfulness of a well-prepared soul—good ground, which is not the ordinary road, or stony ground, or a field of thorns. What is perhaps more important still is the description of the Kingdom of God and its growth: at the beginning, it is an imperceptible seed like a grain of mustard, or hidden like leaven in paste; its growth is not noticed, but it is strong like life itself; the man who has sown the seed on the land does not think of it again, but it germinates, the leaf appears, then the ear, then the formed grain, and we have the harvest. These parables bring home to us more than all affirmations the true nature of the kingdom of God and of its development: its growth and progress are noticed by no one; in the souls wherein God has planted it, it is as it were hidden, lowly, silent, and yet it ferments, germinates, and affects everything with its life; and the same law applies to Israel and to the whole human race. No lesson was more needed by those people who were always seeking for a sign from Heaven, and who awaited from one day to the next the dreadful advent of the Kingdom of God.

No less needed was the lesson of patience taught them by the cockle and the net: instinctively we all would say to the good man of the house: Wilt thou that we go and gather it up? No, he replies, lest perhaps gathering up the cockle you root up the wheat also together with it. Wait for the day of the harvest, the Last Day.

This teaching was suggested by the parables to all those who heard them, but Jesus set it forth with more emphasis in the in-

terpretation He gave to the Apostles; and there were also other mysteries which He revealed to them, and which were not comprised in the parables: if we compare the parable of the wheat and the cockle with the interpretation given by Jesus we see the perspective extended to infinity: "The harvest is the end of the world; the reapers are the angels. . . . The Son of Man shall send his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all scandals, and them that work iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the just shine as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear" (*Matt. xiii, 39-43*).

What is evident in this scene of the Last Judgment is not only the condemnation of the wicked and the bliss of the just, but also the superhuman majesty of the Son of Man who sends angels, his angels, to carry out His will and to purify His kingdom. This revelation of the office of Christ throws a new light on the parable and gives it a tremendous meaning which the interpretation alone makes known to us.

### *The Galilean Ministry*

The parable of the cockle which we have just studied shows us, in the Lord's field, the growing wheat, and mingled with it, the cockle, which already appears everywhere. Such was the land of Israel towards the end of the first year of the ministry of Jesus, in the spring of the year 29. The crowds, above all in Galilee, had been roused by the preaching and miracles of the Lord, but their enthusiastic admiration, which at times seemed about to carry all before it, came up against a treacherous and violent opposition which, supported by the religious authority of the Scribes and the Pharisees, troubled men's consciences and intimidated their hesitating wills.

After the preaching of the parables, Jesus, wearied by the teaching given to the Jews and his Apostles, went to sleep in the stern of a boat. He had told the Apostles to cross over to the other side of the Lake. Suddenly a storm of wind arose, and the frightened Apostles awoke Jesus: "Master, doth it not concern thee that we perish?" Jesus at once commanded the wind and the sea, and there came a great calm. The Apostles feared exceedingly, and

said one to another: "Who is this, then, that both wind and sea obey him?" (*Mark iv, 35-41*).

As soon as they had disembarked on the other side of the lake, in the night-time, there ran to him a nude and wounded man. He came before Jesus, crying: "What is to me and to thee, O Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure thee by God that thou torment me not!" He was possessed, but Jesus freed him saying: "Go out of the man, thou unclean spirit!" And the devils—they were many—entered into a herd of swine, and cast these animals into the sea. The alarm was given by the men who were looking after the herd; the inhabitants came together; they found at the feet of Jesus, calm and decently clad, the man who had been possessed, and who was a few hours before the terror of the countryside (*Mark v, 1-20*).

Jesus crossed over the lake once more. At once a multitude ran to Him. One of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus, fell at His feet, saying: "My daughter is at the point of death, but come, lay thy hands upon her, that she may be safe, and may live." As Jesus followed him and the crowd pressed upon Him, a woman who had suffered from an issue of blood for twelve years made her way through the crowd and touched His garment: she was cured. Jesus at once stopped: "Who has touched me?" he asked. Trembling all over with emotion and shame, the woman threw herself at his feet, and confessed all to him. "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole: go in peace, and be thou whole of thy disease." He was still speaking when some came and told Jairus: "Thy daughter is dead; why dost thou trouble the master any further?" Jesus heard this, and said: "Fear not, only believe." He sent away all the people, and took with him only Peter, James and John. They entered the house, where everyone was weeping and wailing. "Why make you this ado and weep?" he asked, "the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth." And they laughed him to scorn. He put them all out, and followed only by the father and mother of the girl and his three companions, He entered into the death chamber; He took the damsel by the hand, and said to her: "Talitha, koum—Damsel, arise," and the little one rose and walked. Jesus requested silence, and said to the parents: "Give her to eat" (*Mark v, 21-43*).

These miracles, recounted by St. Mark from the recollections

of St. Peter with such simplicity and life, bring home to us the character of Our Lord's ministry in Galilee at this time. He preached, He cured, He cast out devils; pressed by the crowd wherever He went, He devoted Himself to them until He fell asleep at the end of His day. No master was so accessible, none so mighty: with a word He raised from the dead the daughter of Jairus, as He had raised the son of the widow at Nain and as He would later raise up Lazarus. With a word He calmed the wind and the sea; the Apostles in presence of this miracle were full of fear, and yet even before they had awaked Him, they knew well that the storm which terrified them did not threaten Him: "Master, doth it not concern thee that we perish?" In this way He passed through all dangers, and soon we shall see Him similarly pass through the midst of the people of Nazareth when they wanted to kill Him. God had long ago said, speaking of the children of Israel: "Touch not mine anointed!" These words apply above all to Him who is the Christ: the elements obey Him, and even those men who are His enemies do not dare to touch Him. If we wish to understand the extent of this divine protection, let the life of Jesus be compared with that of the Apostle St. Paul, for instance, five times scourged, thrice beaten with rods, once stoned, five times shipwrecked. Jesus aroused more hatred even than His Apostle, but He was never touched, until the day when God delivered Him up and He gave Himself up to the powers of darkness. Throughout all His luminous life, menaced by all but injured by none, we hear the echo of the Father's words: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased!"

And yet there were eyes whom this light hurt; there were souls who preferred darkness in its place. After the raising of the daughter of Jairus, Jesus went up to Nazareth;<sup>45</sup> He preached in the synagogue; He commented, as we have said already, on the prophecy of Isaias concerning the Servant of Jahveh. At first they were under the spell of His "words of grace," but very soon there were doubts and murmurs: this prophet was known at Nazareth, and also His family:

<sup>45</sup> *Mark* vi, 1-6; *Matt.* xiii, 53-8; *Luke* iv, 16-30. Several historians distinguish two visits of Jesus to Nazareth in the narrative of St. Luke: the first would be at the beginning of the Galilean ministry; the other, related also by Mark and Matthew, would be later on, at the time we are now discussing. This duplication does not seem to us to be likely.

"Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James and Joseph and Jude and Simon? Are not also his sisters here with us?" <sup>46</sup>

Certainly they had heard talk of His miracles at Capharnaum, but the people of Nazareth displayed less admiration than jealousy. Jesus said to them:

"Doubtless you will say to me this similitude: Physician, heal thyself: as great things as we have heard done in Capharnaum, do also here in thy own country. Amen I say to you, that no prophet is accepted in his own country."

He then reminded them of Elias and Eliseus: it was for the benefit of strangers, and not of their fellow citizens, that these prophets worked their greatest miracles; it was to a woman of Sidon that Elias was sent; it was a Syrian, Naaman, that Eliseus cured of leprosy. That was equivalent to warning them of the reprobation of the Jews and the calling of the Gentiles. There was a burst of anger: they rose up and took Jesus out of the synagogue to the top of the hill, from which they intended to throw Him down. "But he, passing through the midst of them, went his way."

### *The Crisis in the Galilean Ministry*

These episodes in the ministry of Jesus show us the state of mind of people in Galilee: in some it was one of enthusiastic admiration; in others it was a mistrustful and jealous reserve, quite ready to become violent opposition. It was then that Jesus sent out His twelve Apostles on a mission; He sent them without provision, "no scrip, no bread, nor money in their purse"; "be shod with sandals, and put not on two coats." He added: "Whosoever you shall enter into a house, there abide till you depart from that place. And whosoever shall not receive you nor hear you: going forth from thence, shake off the dust from your feet for a testimony to them." And going forth they preached repentance, and cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many sick and healed them. (*Mark* vi, 10; 13).

This preaching and miracles, which extended through the

<sup>46</sup> *Mark* vi, 3. On these brethren and sisters of the Lord, cf. *supra*, p. 111, n. 39. What St. John says later on must here be borne in mind: "His brethren did not believe in him" (vii, 5). This unbelief amongst the nearest relatives of Jesus enables us to understand better the sentiments of the people of Nazareth.

whole country, created a great sensation. At home in his palace of Machaerus, where he had just killed St. John the Baptist, Herod was roused. He said to his servants: "This is John the Baptist, he is risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works show forth themselves in him" (*Matt.* xiv, 2).

The tyrant's alarm was a great danger for Jesus. Not long before, when John was cast into prison, the Master had had to leave Judea; the death of the Forerunner was a fresh warning to Him: Galilee, subject to Herod's rule, was no longer a safe retreat. He went into the desert (*Matt.* xiv, 13). An additional reason led Him there: the crowds which pressed round Him were so great that the Apostles had no longer time even to eat (*Mark.* vi, 31).

He entered a boat, and following the northern bank, reached Bethsaida Julias, beyond which was desolate hill country. Jesus was not to find solitude there: He had been seen to leave, and the crowd followed Him on land almost as quickly as He had crossed by sea. Jesus had compassion on them, "because they were as sheep not having a shepherd, and he began to teach them many things" (*Mark* vi, 34).

When the evening came, the disciples said to Jesus: "This is a desert place, and the hour is now far spent; send these people away, that going into the villages they may buy themselves food to eat." He replied: Give you them to eat." "Must we then go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread and give them to eat?" "How many loaves have you?"—"Five, and two fishes" (*Mark* vi, 35-38). Jesus made them sit down in groups of hundreds and fifties; the loaves and fishes were distributed to them, as much as they wanted. All were satisfied; the remainder was gathered up, and twelve baskets were filled. Those who were thus fed were five thousand, not counting women and children. Then these men, seeing the miracle which had been worked, cried out: "This is of a truth the prophet that is to come into the world." Jesus, knowing that they would come to take Him by force and make Him king, fled again into the mountain Himself alone (*John* vi, 14-15).

And so this day, begun in such enthusiasm, and crowned with so striking a miracle, ended in the withdrawal of Jesus to escape from the people. On this decisive occasion, the wrong idea to which the Jews held so tenaciously was clearly manifested: what they desired from Jesus was the re-establishment of the kingdom of

Israel, over which He would be king. Jesus could not allow that: His kingdom is not of this world; in presence of their blind enthusiasm which threatened Him, He fled. The Jews were hard hit by this disillusionment. If He was not the king of Israel, who was He? Very soon, at Cæsarea Philippi, when Jesus asks the Apostles what people think of the Son of Man, He will receive these confused answers, in which we see vestiges of Jewish belief: "Some say: John the Baptist, others Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets." Moreover, after the great disappointment of that evening, the discourse at Capharnaum on the bread of life must have completed their disillusionment: they were too much attached to things of earth to follow Jesus when He spoke to them of the bread of heaven.

The Apostles, nevertheless, passed over the lake; Jesus, before sending the crowds away, had insisted on the disciples going.<sup>47</sup> While they were at sea, a violent wind arose from the west. They had started out at nightfall, and at three o'clock in the morning they had only gone a small part of the way, about thirty furlongs (*John* vi, 19). Jesus appeared to them, walking on the water; St. Peter, impatient to rejoin Him, said: "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come to thee upon the waters."—"Come." Peter went down out of the boat, and walked towards Jesus, but seeing the wind, he took fright, and began to sink. He cried: "Lord save me!" Jesus stretched forth his hand, and took hold of him, saying: "O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt?" The two of them went into the boat, the wind ceased, and those who were in the boat threw themselves at His feet, crying: "Truly thou art the Son of God!" (*Matt.* xiv, 25-33).

This great miracle must have strengthened the faith of the Apostles, which had been disturbed by the events of the evening, and which was going to be tried by the sermon on the bread of life, with its mysterious subject-matter. If they are then tempted to regard this discourse as too hard, they will recall the apparition in the night, Jesus walking on the waters, and they will have less difficulty in believing that this divine body can, if the Lord wills, overrule the laws of nature.

<sup>47</sup> This fact, noted by *Matt.* xiv, 22, and *Mark* vi, 45, shows what difficulty the Twelve had to get away from the crowd, and how Jesus insisted on their departure. The contagion of this national enthusiasm, followed by disillusionment, might have constituted a great danger for the Apostles.



*The Bread of Life*

On the next day the crowd searches for Jesus, and not finding Him beyond the lake, they go back to Capharnaum and there meet Him. "You seek me," says Jesus to them, "not because you have seen miracles, but because you did eat of the loaves and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto life everlasting, which the Son of Man will give you" (*John vi, 26-27*).

From the beginning of the sermon, we sense the opposition which is brewing and which is going to manifest itself: Jesus seeks to awake in the hearts of the Jews the desire of heavenly goods, but they instead, proud and suspicious, remind Jesus of the manna which Moses had given to their fathers, and say to Him: "What sign dost thou show that we may see and may believe thee? What dost thou work?" For a moment the Jews yield to the divine attraction. Jesus had said to them: "The bread of God is he who cometh down from heaven and giveth life to the world." "Lord," they reply, "give us always this bread." They did not yet know this bread; they began nevertheless to desire it. Jesus reveals Himself more clearly: "It is I who am the bread of life, he that cometh to me shall no more hunger, he that believeth in me shall never thirst." But already the Jews no longer followed Him; like the people of Nazareth, they recalled what they thought they knew of Him and His family: "Is not this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How then saith he, 'I came down from heaven?'" Jesus replies to them: "Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to me except the Father, who hath sent me, draw him, and I will raise him up in the last day. . . . I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever, and the bread that I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world." In face of renewed murmurs, He is more emphatic still: "Amen, amen I say to you. Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up in the last day. For my flesh is truly food, and my blood is truly drink. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, abideth in me and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, the same also shall live by me. This is the bread that has come down from

heaven; not as your fathers did eat manna and are dead; he that eateth this bread shall live for ever" (*John* vi, 43-59).

This discourse is one of the most important in the Gospels. St. John, who leaves aside almost the whole of the Galilean ministry, is careful to relate the multiplication of the loaves and the sermon at Capharnaum. Of the institution of the holy Eucharist, recounted by the three synoptists, he says nothing, but he is careful to give us the whole of this great discourse, which promises and explains it. Belief in the Real Presence finds therein a very sure foundation; theology discovers therein inexhaustible riches: the Incarnation, the coming into the world of the Son of God, the bread from heaven which gives life to the world, the gift of the life which, flowing wholly from the Father to the Son, is communicated by the Son to mankind, the indispensable necessity of communicating in the flesh and blood of Christ in order to receive this life, and lastly, the revelation and attraction by the Father, the unique source of our faith: "No man can come to me except the Father draw him."

The history of the life and ministry of Jesus also receives much light from this narrative. Of the five thousand men who had followed Jesus beyond the lake, only a small number were gathered here in the synagogue of Capharnaum, and even these were drawn only by the memory of the bread they had eaten. In vain did Jesus endeavour to make them desire the living bread which had come down from heaven; after a moment's attention they drew back, they murmured, and finally went away, and this departure signified a definite abandonment.

"After this many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him. Then Jesus said to the Twelve: 'Will you also go away?' And Simon Peter answered him: 'Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and have known that thou art the Holy One of God.' Jesus answered them: 'Is it not I who have chosen you twelve? And one of you is a devil.' Now he meant Judas Iscariot, for it was he who was to betray him, whereas he was one of the Twelve." (*John* vi, 66-71.)

And so this great effort of Jesus ended in the desertion of the greater part of the disciples, and the betrayal by one of the Twelve. He had worked, not merely for a few sick but for thousands of men, a miracle which had aroused the admiration of all of them, and this enthusiasm had only intensified in them the fever for national in-

dependence which caused them to forget the good things from heaven. As for those who had recovered themselves and had rejoined Him, Jesus endeavoured at Capharnaum to make these love and desire the bread of life which He promised them; they rebelled, and abandoned Him. Amongst the Apostles, Judas was already a traitor. We have reached the time of the Pasch in the year 29. Jesus is going to struggle on, preach, and heal for still another year, and during the whole of this year. He will remain on intimate terms with this traitor, and nothing—not His most touching words, nor His most divine works, will regain this heart which has abandoned Him for ever.

This crisis transformed the whole apostolate of Jesus. He had to renounce His Galilean preaching, so long and so eagerly listened to. The hostility of Herod prevented His long stays on the borders of the lake; He returned there on several occasions, but only in passing. His disciples themselves deserted Him in great numbers; Jesus would still see more than once compact crowds pressing around Him: in the desert, where there would be a second multiplication of the loaves,<sup>48</sup> in Jerusalem at the time of the great festivals. In these great assemblies of people, and, above all, on Palm Sunday, the flame of enthusiasm which had burnt so long in Galilee would be relit, but its light would quickly die down; Jesus would no longer find amongst His Galileans the faithful and constant docility of the early days. Even after Pentecost, when the Church was founded in Jerusalem, we do not see a church being organised in Galilee. The Apostles were, of course, Galileans, and around them in the Church of Jerusalem they must have had many people from Galilee, but though Galilee gave to Jesus some of its sons, and those the best, it did not give itself entirely to Him.

As for the towns round the Lake, in which Jesus had worked so many miracles, they were unfaithful to Him, and the last words He addressed to them were words of malediction:

“Woe to thee, Corozain, woe to thee, Bethsaida: for if in Tyre and Sidon had been wrought the miracles that have been wrought in you, they had long ago done penance in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capharnaum, shalt thou be exalted up to heaven? thou shalt go down even unto hell. For if in Sodom had

<sup>48</sup> *Matt.* xv, 32-9; *Mark* viii, 1-10. Cf. *Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ*, Vol. I, p. 344.

been wrought the miracles that have been wrought in thee, perhaps it had remained unto this day. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee." <sup>49</sup>

### *The Great Revelations*

Jesus had to withdraw from Galilee, just as the year before He had left Jerusalem and Judea: the Gospel was apparently uprooted and expelled from the land of Israel. But though the multitude of Jews had dispersed, the little flock of the Apostles grouped around Peter was faithful, except Judas. It was to this group of disciples that the most exalted revelations were reserved.

Leaving the lands of Herod Antipas, Jesus retired into the northern province subject to Philip. In this province, which was almost entirely pagan, Jesus did not address himself to the multitude; He found there scarcely any other disciples besides those who had come with Him, and especially the Twelve. It was on these that He concentrated his efforts; in one year when he would have left this earth, they would remain the depositories of His secrets, and would enrich the Church with them.

### *The Confession of St. Peter*

Returning up the Valley of the Jordan, the little group arrived at the source of the river. It was there, on grassy terraces where water trickles everywhere, near to a cave dedicated to Pan, that Philip the Tetrarch had at his coming founded the town which he had called Cæsarea Philippi. Into his pagan town Jesus did not enter; he stopped amidst the orchards which surrounded it. He went aside to pray; it was the eve of a decisive day. The Apostles rejoined Him, conversation began, familiar as always, and with a trustful intimacy. But all at once Jesus puts the question which dominates everything: "Whom do men say that the Son of Man is?" and the replies multiply, reflecting the uncertainty of the Jews: some say John the Baptist, others Elias, others again Jeremias, or one of the prophets. The attention and faith of the Apostles being thus aroused, the Master asks them:

"But you: whom do you say that I am? Simon Peter answered and said: 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.' Jesus answering

<sup>49</sup> *Matt. xi, 21-4; cf. Luke x, 13-15.*

said to him: 'Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona: because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I say to thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven' (*Matt.* xvi, 15-19).

In this solemn scene we find once more what was apparent already at Capharnaum: the indecision of the Jews, and, contrasted with it, the sure faith of the Apostles. Here once more it is Peter who speaks in the name of his brethren: but in the course of the two or three months which separate these two confessions, the opposition between the two groups has become more manifest. We are no longer at Capharnaum, but at Cæsarea Philippi; the Jews are far off, and amongst them the hesitation of the first days has increased; they recognise still in Jesus a man invested with a supernatural mission, but no longer the Messias; their faith, incapable of ascending higher, puts Him on a level with the great men of the past. In Peter, on the contrary, faith has never been so firm or so clear; he has received a revelation from the Father, and he believes it. Once more is verified the providential law: "To him who hath shall be given; from him who hath not there shall be taken even that which he hath."

The grace of faith calls forth as recompense the grace of a new vocation: Simon, son of Jona, shall be Peter, the Rock, and on this rock the Church will be built, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.<sup>50</sup> Peter will have the power to bind and to loose, and all the sentences he declares on earth will be confirmed in heaven; later on this power of binding and loosing will be conferred on all the Apostles.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>50</sup> The meaning of this text is beyond doubt. Protestants attempted for a long time to diminish the office of St. Peter; their interpretations are nowadays universally abandoned. Plummer, an Anglican exegete, writes: "All attempts to explain the 'rock' in any other way than as referring to Peter have ignominiously failed. Neither the confession of Peter nor the faith of Peter is an adequate explanation. But at the same time it is clear that the promise is made to Peter, *as confessing his faith*, and also as confessing it *on behalf of the Twelve*." The objections which have been advanced against the complete authenticity of this text must be similarly set aside: no statement of Jesus has more manifestly retained its Aramaic colour. Cf. *Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ*, Vol. I, pp. 354-8.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 100.

"Then Jesus commanded his disciples that they should tell no one that he was the Christ" (*Matt.* xvi, 20). This is not the first time that we find in the Gospels these injunctions of silence;<sup>52</sup> but never had they greater cause. In the confusion which existed at that time in the opinions of the Jews concerning Jesus, the greatest prudence was called for, and this reserve was especially necessary in the half-pagan land then being traversed by the Master with the little group of his disciples.

### *The Prediction of the Passion*

At least in the Apostles themselves the faith which Peter had just confessed ought to be sufficiently strong to bear the weight of the saddest confidences. And so for the first time Jesus tells them of the future which awaits Him: "He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the ancients and scribes and chief priests, and be put to death, and the third day rise again." (*Matt.* xvi, 21). Later on Jesus will explain in more precise detail the terrible sufferings of His passion, the scourging and the cross; but His death, which He already foretells, is for the Apostles a terrible and unforeseen revelation. Jesus adds at once, as He always does, the prophecy of His resurrection to that of His death, but the blow has been so painful that this glorious vision remains unperceived. Peter cannot contain himself, and taking Jesus aside, he says to Him: "Lord, be it far from thee, this shall not be unto thee." But He, turning, says to Peter: "Go behind me, Satan! Thou art a scandal unto me, because thou thinkest not according to the views of God, but according to those of men." Peter keeps silent, humbly and sadly, but does not as yet understand. But this lesson of suffering is so indispensable that Jesus desires to give it even to those whom He had not admitted on this occasion to the communication of the Messianic secret:

"And calling the multitude<sup>53</sup> together with His disciples, He said to them: 'If any man will follow me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel, shall save

<sup>52</sup> On the Messianic secret in the Gospels as a whole, and particularly on this occasion, cf. L. de Grandmaison, *Jesus Christ*, Engl. tr., Vol. II, p. 17 and n. 7.

<sup>53</sup> We see by this word that even in this half-pagan country the fame of Jesus attracted to him other witnesses besides the Twelve.

it. For what shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For he that shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation: the Son of Man also will be ashamed of him, when he shall come in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.'” (*Mark* viii, 34-38. Cf. *Matt.* xvi, 24-27; *Luke* ix, 23-26.)

Many times had Jesus repeated to His disciples the conditions which He required in all those who desired to follow Him.<sup>54</sup> On this occasion, coming after this first prediction of the Passion, this instruction was particularly important: we see now what it means to follow Jesus, whither the Master leads His disciples, and by what way. Six days after this conversation at Cæsarea Philippi, a still more solemn revelation was granted to three Apostles, and by them to the whole Church: the Transfiguration.<sup>55</sup>

### *The Transfiguration*

Jesus had taken with Him Peter, James and John, and had withdrawn to the mountain to pray; “and whilst he prayed, the aspect of his countenance was transfigured, and his raiment became white and glittering”; close to Him were two men talking with Him: these were Moses and Elias. The Apostles were impressed by this vision; Peter cried out: “Master, it is good for us to be here, let us make three tents, one for thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias.” He knew not what he said, adds St. Mark, for they were all afraid.

But Jesus was going to receive a testimony still more sacred than that of Moses and Elias: a luminous cloud overshadowed them, and the Apostles were frightened when they entered the cloud. From the cloud a voice was heard: “This is my beloved son, hear him.” At Cæsarea Philippi Jesus had said to Peter: “Flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven”; now this revelation made itself heard; from the cloud where He dwelt, God repeated to the Apostles the supreme testimony which He had already given to His Son at His baptism; and this time the

<sup>54</sup> We find them in *Matt.* x, 34-9, in the instructions given to the Apostles; in *Luke* xiv, 26-7, addressed to all the disciples; in *Luke* xvii, 33, in an eschatological discourse; in *John* xii, 25-6, when Jesus entered Jerusalem.

<sup>55</sup> This scene is related by the three synoptists: *Matt.* xvii, 1-13; *Mark* ix, 2-13; *Luke* ix, 28-36. Contrary to their custom, all three give the date: six days (*Luke* says “about eight days”) after Cæsarea Philippi; they mean thereby to bring out the close link which attaches these two revelations to each other.

testimony was better understood and more perfectly obeyed, finding hearts better prepared.

"And as they came down from the mountain, he charged them not to tell any man what things they had seen, till the Son of Man shall be risen again from the dead" (*Mark ix, 8*). Here once more we find the providential economy of the Christian revelation: this manifestation, the most striking in the whole life of the Lord, had only three witnesses, and its secret was to be kept until His Resurrection. Then the witnesses would speak, and the Church would believe on their word.<sup>56</sup>

### *The Disciples*

After these great revelations, which mark the summer of the year 29, Jesus did not delay in leaving Galilee; he was going to ascend to Jerusalem for the great festivals, cross Samaria, preach in Perea, and withdraw to the desert. We cannot follow in detail all these episodes which filled the last year in the life of Christ. Two most important facts demand our attention: the choosing and training of the disciples, and the efforts made by Jesus at Jerusalem.

Already at the beginning of the public ministry we have seen how the Lord called to Him the Twelve; these Apostles were evidently the pastors and doctors of the Church that Jesus intended to found. They will remain such always; Judas will fall away, but he will be replaced in the apostolic college by St. Matthias. When there is question of adding this twelfth Apostle, Peter, the head of the apostolic college, will ask that he be chosen from "those men who have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus came in and went out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us" (*Acts i, 21-22*). There were, then, during the whole life of Jesus, a group of faithful disciples who followed Him closely like the Apostles themselves.

It is St. Luke above all who tells us of these disciples<sup>57</sup> in the second part of his Gospel, in the course of the accounts that he gives

<sup>56</sup> An echo of this preaching will be found in the Second letter of St. Peter (i, 16-19). Cf. *Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ*, Vol. I, pp. 367-8.

<sup>57</sup> It is very likely that in the course of the long stay which he made at Cæsarea near to St. Paul when a prisoner (60 to 62), St. Luke came to know personally some of these disciples, or persons connected with them, as for instance Philip the Deacon and his four daughters, or again Cleophas, one of the two disciples of Emmaus.



of the journeys of Jesus to Samaria, Judea, and Perea. He first narrates some incidents which show the conditions laid down by Jesus on whosoever wished to follow Him:

“As they walked in the way, a certain man said to him: ‘I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.’ Jesus said to him: ‘The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head.’ But he said to another: ‘Follow me.’ And he said: ‘Lord, suffer me first to go and to bury my father.’ And Jesus said to him: ‘Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou, and preach the kingdom of God.’ And another said: ‘I will follow thee, Lord; but let me first take my leave of them that are at my house.’ Jesus said to him: ‘No man putting his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God.’”<sup>58</sup>

### *The Mission of the Disciples*

We see that Jesus demanded first of all from those who desired to follow Him, detachment from family ties and the abandonment of earthly goods. That is what He set before the rich young man, and the poor fellow recoiled before the sacrifice: that is what He preached to the little group of faithful ones who followed Him:

“Fear not, little flock, for it hath pleased your Father to give you a kingdom. Sell what you possess and give alms. Make to yourselves bags which grow not old, a treasure in heaven which faileth not: where no thief approacheth, nor moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (*Luke* xii, 32-34).

In this whole chapter of St. Luke we find again many sayings included by St. Matthew in the Sermon on the Mount; but the requirements are here more urgent: Jesus is addressing himself to chosen ones, to the “little flock” which is following Him. This distinction between the multitude and the chosen few is very clear in the story of the rich young man related by the three synoptists.<sup>59</sup> This young man had faithfully carried out the Law, he sincerely desired eternal life, and when he came to kneel before Jesus, there

<sup>58</sup> *Luke* ix, 57-62. Cf. *Matt.* viii, 19-22. These incidents are placed by Luke in the journey across Samaria; Matthew narrates the first two and puts them in Galilee. The date matters little, what makes these incidents important is the lesson which follows from them.

<sup>59</sup> *Matt.* xix, 16-30; *Mark* x, 17-31; *Luke* xviii, 18-30.

was in him so much uprightness that Jesus looked on him and loved him; he lacked only one thing:

"If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me."

There are, then, besides the commandments, some more exacting rules of conduct which are imposed on all those who "will be perfect." Jesus sums them up in one word: the abandonment of earthly goods. This distinction between commandments and counsels will be found again very clearly in the teaching of the Apostles at Jerusalem,<sup>60</sup> in St. Paul,<sup>61</sup> and in the Apostolic Fathers.<sup>62</sup> From the first it has characterised Christian morality.

In presence of the severe conditions which Jesus imposes on those who want to follow Him, one must reflect well:

"Which of you having a mind to build a tower, doth not first sit down, and reckon the charges that are necessary, whether he have the wherewithal to finish it; lest, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that see it begin to mock him, saying: 'This man began to build, and was not able to finish'? . . . So likewise every one of you that doth not renounce all that he possesseth, cannot be my disciple" (*Luke* xiv, 28-33).

These disciples gathered together by the Master are called not only to follow Him, but also to preach; at the beginning of the journeys in which Jesus was once more to undertake the evangelisation of Southern Palestine, He sent forth seventy disciples on a mission.<sup>63</sup>

"The Lord appointed also other seventy-two and he sent them two and two before his face into every city and place whither he himself was to come. And he said to them: 'The harvest indeed is great, but the labourers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send labourers into his harvest. Go: Behold I send you as lambs among wolves. Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes; and salute no man by the way. Into whatsoever house you enter, first say: Peace to this house. And if a son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon him; but

<sup>60</sup> Ananias and Sapphira had the right either to keep their property or the price of it (*Acts* v, 4).

<sup>61</sup> In particular, in the question of virginity (*I Cor.* vii, 25-40).

<sup>62</sup> Above all in the *Pastor of Hermas*, fifth similitude.

<sup>63</sup> The manuscripts and Fathers give two readings: seventy and seventy-two. The variation is unimportant.

if not, it shall return to you. And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they have: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Remove not from house to house. And into what city soever you enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you. And heal the sick that are therein, and say to them: The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. But into whatsoever city you enter, and they receive you not, going forth into the streets thereof, say: Even the very dust of your city that cleaveth to us, we wipe off against you. Yet know this, that the Kingdom of God is at hand. I say to you, it shall be more tolerable at that day for Sodom, than for that city" (*Luke x, 1-12*).

These instructions given to the disciples recall those which the Master had given to the Twelve when sending them out on a mission.<sup>64</sup> The mission of the Apostles crowned the ministry of Jesus in Galilee and extended its influence; the mission of the disciples prepared for the evangelisation of the southern provinces. This second preaching, like the first, was eagerly welcomed: the disciples returned full of joy: "Lord," said they to Jesus, "the devils themselves are subject to us in Thy name!" (*Luke x, 17*). And Jesus answered: "I saw Satan like lightning fall from heaven." This was one of the most lively joys in the Gospel, it arose not only from the successes already obtained, but from those still greater ones which it heralded:

"In that same hour, Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Ghost, and said: 'I confess to thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones. Yea, Father, for so it hath seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered to me by my Father; and no one knoweth who the Father is, but the Son, and to whom the Son will reveal him.' And turning to his disciples, he said: 'Blessed are the eyes that see the things which you see. For I say to you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see the things that you see and have not seen them; and to hear the things that you hear and have not heard them.'"<sup>65</sup>

This statement of Jesus, one of the most luminous recorded by the synoptists, clarifies the whole Gospel history: it explains the

<sup>64</sup> The mission of the Apostles is related by *Matt. x, 1-15*, *Mark vi, 7-13*, and *Luke ix, 1-6*.

<sup>65</sup> These two statements of Jesus are reported by St. Matthew but in different circumstances: the first after the embassy from John the Baptist (*xi, 25*), the second after the parables (*xiii, 16*). We must add that the mission of the disciples is given only in St. Luke; it provides a better setting for these words and makes their bearing clearer.

infinite importance of this revelation, so ardently awaited by the prophets and so misunderstood by the majority of the Jews; it distinguishes between the humble folk who receive it and the wise who reject it; lastly, and above all, it introduces us into the secret of God: the ineffable union of the Father and the Son, who know each other fully, and are the only ones who do so, apart from those whom they deign to introduce by grace into this intimacy. In this sentence is reflected the whole theology of the speeches of Jesus at Jerusalem as reported to us by St. John.

### *The Preaching of Jesus at Jerusalem*

From the commencement of his ministry, Jesus had directed his efforts towards Jerusalem. Driven out by the hostility of the leaders, and above all, of the Pharisees, he returned there only in the course of the last year of his ministry. The Master did not prolong his stay, but He went there and spoke on the occasion of the great festivals: Pentecost,<sup>66</sup> the Feast of Tabernacles, the Dedication of the Temple, and the Pasch; the concourse of pilgrims made this preaching more fruitful; in addition, the presence of Galileans at Jerusalem was a help to Jesus: even at the approach of the supreme crisis, His enemies did not want His arrest and trial to take place during the feast, "lest there should be a tumult among the people" (*Mark* xiv, 2; *Matt.* xxvi, 5).

These addresses are reported only by St. John, but the accounts of the synoptists (*Matt.* xxiii, 37, *Luke* xiii, 34) presuppose them. All these scenes, described in the fourth gospel, are of a dramatic and poignant truth. Here better than anywhere else are manifested the fluctuations of opinion. Thus, at the beginning of the Feast of Tabernacles (vii, 11), "the Jews sought him, and said: 'Where is he?' And there was much murmuring among the multitude concerning him. For some said: 'He is a good man.' And others said: 'No, but he seduceth the people.'" Jesus nevertheless showed Himself openly and spoke. Immediately there was a repetition of the odious calumny of the Pharisees: "Thou hast a devil" (vii, 20). Jesus silenced His calumniators; the people of Jerusalem cried out: 'Is not this he whom they seek to kill? And behold he speaketh openly, and they say nothing to him. Have the

<sup>66</sup> We may with probability put the miracle at the pool of Bezatha on the Feast of Pentecost. Cf. *Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ*, Vol. I, p. xxix.

rulers known for a truth that this is the Christ? Yet we know this man, whence he is: but when the Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is." (25-27).

But many hearing Him were touched, and said amongst themselves: "When the Christ cometh, shall he do more miracles than these which this man doth?" (31).

"On the last and great day of the festivity, Jesus stood and cried, saying: 'If any man thirst, let him come to me, and drink. He that believeth in me, as the scripture saith, Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.' . . . Of that multitude therefore . . . some said: 'This is the prophet indeed'; others said: 'This is the Christ.' But some said: 'Doth the Christ come out of Galilee?' . . . Some of them would have apprehended him: but no man laid hands upon him. Attendants sent by the high priests and the Pharisees returned without having arrested him. 'Why have you not brought him?' demanded the leaders. The men replied: 'Never did man speak like this man.' The Pharisees therefore answered them: 'Are you also seduced? Hath any one of the rulers believed in him, or of the Pharisees? But this multitude that knoweth not the law, are accursed.' Nicodemus tried to intervene: 'Doth our law judge any man unless it first hear him and know what he doth?' They tried to intimidate him like the others: 'Art thou also a Galilean? Search the scriptures and see that out of Galilee a prophet riseth not.'" (vii, 37-52).

And in the midst of this hesitant multitude, and of the Pharisees and high priests who wished to destroy Him, Jesus dominated all by the ascendancy of His words and His power. Here even more than in Galilee we realise His superhuman greatness, which His enemies could neither destroy nor even hurt. We have just seen Him on the occasion of the Feast of Tabernacles routing the emissaries sent to arrest Him by the authority of His speech. A few days later, Jesus said to the Jews who appealed to Abraham against Him: "Before Abraham was, I am." The exasperated Jews took up stones to cast at Him; Jesus withdrew and went out of the Temple (viii, 59). At the Feast of the Dedication the same scene was repeated: Jesus had just said: "That which my Father hath given me is greater than all. . . . I and the Father are one" (x, 29-30). The Jews once more took up stones to stone Him. Jesus said to them: "Many good works I have showed you from my Father; for which of those works do you stone me?" The Jews answered Him: "For a good work we stone thee not, but for blas-

phemy, and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God." Jesus thereupon reminded them of His works: <sup>67</sup> "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not; but if I do, though you will not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in the Father." The Jews then sought to take Him, but He escaped from their hands (x, 39). It was, indeed, a struggle between light and darkness; darkness endeavoured in vain to seize the light: it escaped them.

### *Theological Character of these Discourses*

In these discourses and the lively and sometimes violent discussions which they aroused, theological affirmations are more frequent and more categorical than in the Galilean preaching. We notice this already in the first incident, the healing of the paralytic at the pool. This miracle was performed by Jesus on a Sabbath day, and the reaction to which it led amongst the Pharisees was the same as that which we have already found more than once: "Therefore did the Jews persecute him," says St. John (v, 16) "because he did these things on the Sabbath." But in His reply, Jesus no longer confined Himself to the motives to which He had appealed in other circumstances, such as "the sabbath is made for man, and not man for the sabbath." His reply is now on a higher plane: "My Father worketh until now, and I work" (v, 17). The Jews understood all the bearing of this statement, and their hatred was redoubled because of it: "Hereupon therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he did not only break the sabbath, but also said God was his Father, making himself equal to God" (v, 18).

We have noticed in the other discourses of Jesus, on the Feast of Tabernacles and the Feast of the Dedication, equally decisive affirmations: in the Father and the Son there are the same action, the same power, the same knowledge, the same doctrine, the same, nature: "I and the Father are one"; and the Son is above all the great men of the Old Testament, and before them, in a life which knows neither beginning nor end: "Before Abraham was made, I am."

<sup>67</sup> First of all, in verses 34-5, Jesus points out how in the Old Testament the divine majesty was communicated to simple men, to judges, and how, *a fortiori*, he could claim a much higher communication. Cf. *Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ*, Vol. II, pp. 106-9.

Similar theological affirmations are found in the synoptic gospels: it suffices to recall what we have found in St. Luke and St. Matthew: "All things are delivered to me by my Father; and no one knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and to whom the Son will reveal him." But it is manifest that such texts are much more numerous in St. John. The reason is to be found in the object of the evangelist, who wrote above all to support the belief of his readers in Jesus Christ, the Son of God (xx, 31). With this object in view, he dwells with predilection on these discourses at Jerusalem. If we ask further why this preaching at Jerusalem had a more theological character, the reply is simple: those whom Jesus had before Him were no longer, as in Galilee, timid and uneducated peasants, but people who had spent their lives in examining the Scriptures (v, 39). Their pressing argumentation called for categorical replies, and their knowledge was wide enough to enable them to grasp the bearing of these; if they were scandalised thereby, this arose not from a weakness which could be treated gently, but from a malice which was inexcusable.

Furthermore, by thus carrying on the discussion on the theological plane, Jesus cut short the dangerous misunderstandings called forth by Messianism. His enemies, at Jerusalem even more than in Galilee, endeavoured to draw Him on to political ground; if He had followed them there, He would certainly have had to inculcate either prudence, in which case the multitudes would have abandoned Him, or else revolt, and then He would have been denounced to the Romans. That is the significance of so many urgent interrogations: "How long dost thou hold our souls in suspense? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly" (*John* x, 24). The same summons was repeated by the Sanhedrin: "If thou be the Christ, tell us" (*Luke* xxii, 66). And it was this also which prompted captious questions: "Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar?" (*Mark* xii, 14).

He escaped all these traps by ascending high above all these human ambitions: My kingdom is not of this world." To this also tends the question He put concerning the Messiah: "David calleth him Lord, how then can he be his son?" (*Mark* xii, 35-37). Jesus did not mean to deny thereby His Davidic sonship; He wanted them to see that He had another origin, infinitely higher. The discourses at Jerusalem constantly bring before His hearers

and even His adversaries these same perspectives, in which the prejudices of a nationalistic Messianism are no longer to be feared. True, His enemies will find even here subject-matter for accusation: in these affirmations they will see blasphemies, and they will seek to stone Him. But at least the controversy becomes purely religious. Thus at the decisive hour of His condemnation before the Sanhedrin and before Pilate, Jesus will set aside every other accusation and will leave only this one remaining: He will not, as they had desired, be condemned as a seditious person threatening the Roman power; but because He said that He was the Son of God.<sup>68</sup>

### *The Last Weeks*

The preaching at Jerusalem already foreshadowed the Passion: the homicidal projects which the enemies of Jesus had formed already at the time of the Galilean ministry were now firmly fixed in their minds; on several occasions they tried to put them into execution, but the hour fixed by God had not yet arrived; Jesus escaped from their hands. He knew well that this protection which now saved Him would soon be withdrawn, and that that would be the hour of darkness; He went on towards this in full confidence: "I must work the works of him that sent me, whilst it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world" (*John ix, 4*).

### *The Raising of Lazarus*

One miracle of the Lord's, more striking than any that He had hitherto performed, was to precipitate the crisis. Lazarus died at Bethany; his sisters, Martha and Mary, hesitated for some time to summon Jesus, their friend. They knew that He had withdrawn to Perea in order to escape the intrigues of the Jews; to bring Him back to the gates of Jerusalem would be to expose Him to great danger. Nevertheless, seeing that the death of their brother was imminent, they sent a messenger charged to say to Him: "Lord, thy friend is sick." Jesus allowed two days to pass, and then set out for Bethany; the frightened Apostles endeavoured to dissuade Him from doing so: "Rabbi, the Jews but now sought to stone thee;

<sup>68</sup> Cf. *Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ*, Vol. II, pp. 105-6.



and goest thou thither again?" Jesus answered: "Are there not twelve hours of the day? If a man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world." Thomas said: "Let us also go, that we may die with him." At Bethany Jesus found the whole house in mourning: Martha and Mary were lamenting their brother, who was now dead four days; many friends had come from Jerusalem and were weeping with them. Martha went out to meet Jesus: "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." She hoped still, but with an imperfect faith. "But now also I know that whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee." Jesus calls her higher: "I am the resurrection and the life," and Martha then says: "Yea, Lord, I have believed that thou art Christ, the Son of the living God, who art come into this world." Mary came in her turn and wept. Jesus wept with her; he made them lead Him to the tomb. The Jews followed Him there; before all the multitude, Jesus cried with a loud voice: "Lazarus, come forth." And the dead man came forth, bound feet and hands with winding bands, and his face covered with a napkin. "Loose him," said Jesus, "and let him go" (*John xi, 1-44*).

Many Jews who had witnessed this miracle believed; but some went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. Then the high priests and the Pharisees called together the Sanhedrin, and on the motion of Caiphas, decided on the death of Jesus: "It is expedient that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not" (*xi, 50*). Jesus withdrew with His disciples to Ephrem, on the borders of the desert.

At the approach of Easter, He made the journey down to Jericho, where He cured a blind man, and from thence He went up to Jerusalem, leading His frightened disciples:

"They were in the way going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus went before them, and they were astonished, and following were afraid. And taking again the Twelve, he began to tell them the things that should befall him, saying, 'Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man shall be betrayed to the chief priests, and to the scribes and ancients, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles. And they shall mock him, and spit on him, and scourge him, and kill him; and the third day he shall rise again'" (*Mark x, 32-34*).

On the Sabbath day before the Pasch, Jesus, followed by His apostles, arrived at Bethany; the sisters of Lazarus welcomed Him,

moved with gratitude, but moved still more by the danger that He was incurring. Was it not in order to raise up their brother that He had exposed Himself to death? Mary poured out a precious ointment on His head, and then on His feet; the whole house was full of its odour. Judas, who had charge of the common purse, and who had robbed His Master, was indignant at this prodigality, by which he thought himself a loser. Jesus defended Mary: "Let her alone: why do you molest her? She hath wrought a good work upon me. . . . She is come beforehand to anoint my body for the burial. Amen I say to you, wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, that also which she hath done shall be told for a memorial of her" (*Mark* xiv, 6-9).

### *Palm Sunday*

The Jews flocked to Bethany to see Jesus, and Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead. The next day, as it was known that Jesus was going to enter Jerusalem, an immense crowd came to meet Him, carrying palm branches and shouting: "Hosanna! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: the King of Israel!" As He went on, the crowd became larger and more enthusiastic. "When he was come into Jerusalem, the whole city was moved, saying 'Who is this?' And the people said: 'This is Jesus the prophet, from Nazareth of Galilee'" (*Matt.* xxi, 10-11). The Pharisees were alarmed: they said to each other: "You see that we prevail nothing; the whole world is gone after him" (*John* xii, 19). Being unable to silence the crowd, they called upon Jesus to intervene: "Master, rebuke thy disciples." To whom He said: "I say to you, that if these shall hold their peace, the stones will cry out" (*Luke* xix, 39). He entered into the Temple, cured the blind and the lame, and the shouts redoubled, and also at the same time the indignation of the chief priests and scribes: "Hearing the children crying 'Hosanna to the Son of David,' they were moved with indignation, and said to him: 'Hearest thou what these say?' And Jesus said to them: 'Yea; have ye never read: Out of the mouth of infants and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?'" (*Matt.* xxi, 14-16).

But in the very midst of His triumph, Jesus did not lose sight of His approaching Passion, and the ruin of his unfaithful people. When descending the Mount of Olives towards Jerusalem, he con-

templated the city and wept: "If thou hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace; but now they are hidden from thy eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, and thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and straiten thee on every side, and beat thee flat to the ground, and thy children who are in thee, and they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone, because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation." <sup>69</sup>

At the close of this day Jesus withdrew and hid Himself (*John* xii, 36). And indeed, in spite of all these acclamations, the Jewish people, intimidated by its leaders, refused to believe. That is the last impression which St. John leaves with us of this day: "Whereas he had done so many miracles before them, they believed not in him" (xii, 37).

### *Holy Week*

Thus began the last week, the most tragic in the life of the Master. Each evening He retired to Bethany, each morning He went to Jerusalem and taught in the Temple. Barely a few weeks previously, when Jesus, after raising Lazarus, had withdrawn to Ephrem, the chief priests and Pharisees had given orders that any one who knew where He was should denounce Him so that they could arrest Him (*John* xi, 57). Now He was in the Temple, in their very presence, and no one dared to lay a hand on Him. Never had their hatred been so violent, but they were afraid of the crowd, and wished to wait for the end of the festival; Judas was to sell his Master to them, and thus enable them to seize Him without giving the alarm to the people.

During these last days, Jesus carried on His work, foiling the plots of His enemies, and setting before them with more force than ever the terrible responsibility which they were incurring and putting upon their people: like murderous husbandmen, these men, to whom God had allotted the task of looking after His well-beloved vineyard the land of Israel, had outraged, beaten, and put to death

<sup>69</sup> *Luke* xix, 41-4. It was also in the course of entering Jerusalem that Jesus experienced the first pangs of the agony: "Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour. But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name!" A voice then came from heaven: "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again" (*John* xii, 27-8).

the servants whom God had sent them to gather in His name the fruits of the vineyard.

"Having yet one son, most dear to him; he sent him also unto them last of all, saying: 'They will reverence my Son.' But the husbandmen said one to another: 'This is the heir; come let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours.' And laying hold of him, they killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard. What, therefore, will the lord of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy those husbandmen, and will give the vineyard to others" (*Mark* xii, 1-9).

The parable was so transparent that the Pharisees could not help crying out: "God forbid!" (*Luke* xx, 16). And Jesus, "looking on them, said: 'What is this then that is written, the stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner? Whosoever shall fall upon that stone, shall be bruised: and upon whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder'" (*Luke* xx, 17-18).

This text makes this impressive and terrible scene live again before our eyes: Jesus, upon whom is already falling the shadow of the Cross, makes one supreme effort in order to stop the Pharisees and the people whom they are destroying. We see Him as St. Luke describes Him, fixing His eyes upon His adversaries and threatening them with this fall and destruction. The chief priests and the Pharisees would have seized Jesus, but they dared not do so, fearing the crowd.

Yet once again Jesus repeated these warnings, and this time it was not a parable, but maledictions which fell with all their force on the scribes and Pharisees:

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites: because you shut the Kingdom of Heaven against men, for you yourselves do not enter in; and those that are going in, you suffer not to enter. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; because you devour the houses of the widows, praying long prayers. For this you shall receive the greater judgment. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; because you go round about the sea and the land to make one proselyte; and when he is made, you make him the child of hell twofold more than yourselves.

". . . Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you are like to whited sepulchres, which outwardly appear to men beautiful, but within are full of dead men's bones, and of all filthiness. So you also outwardly indeed appear to men just; but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; that build the sepulchres of the prophets, and adorn the monuments of

the just, and say: 'If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.' Wherefore you are witnesses against yourselves, that you are the sons of them that killed the prophets.

"Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. You serpents, generation of vipers, how will you flee from the judgment of hell? Therefore, behold I send to you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them you will put to death and crucify, and some you will scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city: that upon you may come all the just blood that hath been shed upon the earth, from the blood of Abel the just even unto the blood of Zacharias the son of Barachias, whom you killed between the Temple and the altar. Amen I say to you, all these things shall come upon this generation" (*Matt.* xxiii, 13-36).

This invective, the most terrible in all the Gospel, reveals the sadness of the Master in face of His people whom perverse leaders were seducing and destroying. This discourse ended with a cry of anguish, and a supreme appeal to Jerusalem:

"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent to thee, how often would I have gathered together thy children, as the hen doth gather her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldest not! Behold, your house shall be left to you, desolate. For I say to you, you shall not see me henceforth till you say: 'Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!' " (*Ibid.*, 37-39).

Leaving Jerusalem, Jesus went up the Mount of Olives with His Apostles. It was there that, turning once more to gaze at the Temple and the Holy City, the Master predicted to His disciples that all would be destroyed: "Seest thou all these great buildings? There shall not be left a stone upon a stone that shall not be thrown down" (*Mark* xiii, 2). The Apostles were astounded; when Jesus had reached with them the top of the Mount, Peter, James, John and Andrew took Him aside and asked Him about the end of time. Jesus replied by describing the catastrophe in which Jerusalem and the Temple would disappear, and then the still more terrible cataclysm in which the whole world will disappear,<sup>70</sup> and all this ended in this moral exhortation:

<sup>70</sup> On this eschatological discourse, cf. *Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ*, Vol. II, pp. 185-212; L. de Grandmaison, *Jesus Christ*, Vol. III, pp. 61-97; Lagrange, *The Gospel of Jesus Christ*, Vol. II, pp. 170-85; Prat, *Jésus Christ*, Vol. II, pp. 239-56; K. Weiss, *Exegetisches zur Irrtumslosigkeit und Eschatologie Jesu Christi*, Münster, 1916.

"Take ye heed, watch and pray. For ye know not when the time is. Even as a man who going into a far country, left his house; and gave authority to his servants over every work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore, for you know not when the lord of the house cometh: at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning. Lest coming on a sudden, he find you sleeping. And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch" (*Mark* xiii, 33-37).

### *The Last Supper*

For a long time the leaders of the Jewish people, the chief priests and Pharisees, had been engaged in a fight to the finish against Jesus; now this struggle had reached its climax; in His last discourse, Christ had clearly revealed their homicidal projects and had foretold to them the punishment for these. These threats only angered them the more. Nothing but the fear of the people held them back; they decided, in order to avoid a rising, to wait for the end of the Paschal festivities.

Then Judas presented himself to them. For more than a year already this unhappy man had abandoned his Master in his heart; at Bethany he considered himself injured by the prodigality of Mary; he resolved to turn traitor: he would thereby gain some money, and he would shield himself from the measures which would doubtless threaten the Apostles as well as Jesus. Accordingly, he went to the chief priests: "What will you give me, and I will deliver him unto you?" They paid him thirty pieces of silver, and from thenceforth he sought opportunity to betray Him (*Matt.* xxvi, 14-16).

Nevertheless, the Pasch drew near, and Jesus desired to celebrate it with His disciples.<sup>71</sup> He therefore sent Peter and John to make the necessary preparations, and Himself followed them with the Apostles.

When the hour was come, He sat down at table, and the Apostles with Him, and He said to them: "With desire I have desired to eat

<sup>71</sup> It is clear from St. John that Jesus was killed on the 14th Nisan, the day when the Jews ate the Pasch: xviii, 28; cf. xiii, 1, xix, 31; *Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ*, Vol. I, p. xxxi. But on the other hand, the texts in the Synoptics give one to understand sufficiently clearly that Jesus had celebrated the Pasch with his disciples: *Luke* xxii, 15, and other texts quoted, *ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 217-18. Various solutions have been advanced of this problem: the most likely one supposes a divergence in the computation of the days of the month; see *ibid.*, pp. 219 *et seq.*; Prat, *Jésus Christ*, Vol. II, pp. 518-20.

this pasch with you, before I suffer. For I say to you, that from this time I will not eat it, till it be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God" (*Luke* xxii, 14-15).

Seeing that His Apostles even in this solemn hour still quarreled about the first places (*ibid.*, 24-27), Jesus, not content with giving them a verbal lesson in humility, gave them one by His own example, in washing the feet of all of them (*John*, xiii, 1-20). Then, repeatedly and with great sorrow, the Master announced the betrayal which was about to take place; Judas, whom no warning could touch, went out suddenly to consummate his crime.

Jesus then accomplished what He had promised the preceding year at Capharnaum: He gave to His Apostles, and by them to the Church, the bread from heaven. This institution of the Holy Eucharist is attested to us by the three synoptics and by St. Paul. He must transcribe here the narrative of this fact which will govern the whole life of the Church and all its worship:

"Whilst they were at supper, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke, and gave to His disciples, and said, 'Take ye, and eat. This is my body.' And taking the chalice, He gave thanks, and gave to them, saying: 'Drink ye all of this. For this is my blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many unto the remission of sins. And I say to you, I will not drink from henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I shall drink it with you anew in the kingdom of my Father.'" <sup>72</sup>

The teaching of St. Paul to his converts sufficiently reveals to us the simple and docile faith with which from the first the Church has received these solemn affirmations of the Master:

"As often as you shall eat this bread, and drink the chalice, you shall show the death of the Lord, until he come. Therefore, whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord. But let a man prove himself: and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of the chalice. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord" (*I Cor.* xi, 26-29).

The discourse at Capharnaum which we have given above, had prepared the Apostles for the understanding of this mystery, and

<sup>72</sup> *Matt.* xxvi, 26-9. Cf. *Mark* xiv, 22-5; *Luke* xxii, 14-20; *I Cor.* xi, 23-9. On the meaning of these four passages, cf. *Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ*, Vol. II, pp. 236 *et seq.*

has subsequently initiated all Christians into it. Thereby they have come to understand the intimate connection between the Incarnation and the Eucharist, and the indispensable necessity for every man to receive this bread from heaven, the life of the world:

"I am the bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the desert, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that if any man eat of it, he may not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever, and the bread that I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world" (*John vi*, 48-51).

These promises are now clarified and completed: this flesh is going to be given for the salvation of the world. It is already given at the Supper, as it will be in a few hours on the Cross, and that is what is signified by these words of the institution: "This is my body, delivered for you," <sup>73</sup> "this is my blood, the blood of the testament, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins." <sup>74</sup> And when the faithful receive this body and blood, they communicate in the sacrifice of the Lord.<sup>75</sup> Until the last day, this sacrifice will be represented really before their eyes; Jesus will have left the earth, but the Apostles, and priests after them, will offer His sacrifice, obedient to the command He gave them: "Do this in memory of me." <sup>76</sup>

### *The Discourse After the Supper*

The great discourse which followed the Supper, and which St. John reports,<sup>77</sup> constitutes an echo of the words of institution of the Eucharist: "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abide in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you the branches: he that

<sup>73</sup> Text of St. Paul and St. Luke.

<sup>74</sup> Text of St. Matthew, and also of St. Mark ("this is my blood, the blood of the covenant which is shed for many"), of St. Paul ("this chalice is the new testament in my blood"), and of St. Luke ("this chalice is the new testament in my blood, shed for you").

<sup>75</sup> This is the express teaching of St. Paul, *I Cor.* x, 14-21.

<sup>76</sup> *Luke* xxii, 19; *I Cor.* xi, 24. Cf. *Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ*, Vol. II, pp. 247-50, and p. 242.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. *Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ*, Vol. II, pp. 255-88.



abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for without me you can do nothing.”<sup>78</sup>

And together with our union with Him, Jesus urges our own union with each other; this is the “new commandment” which Jesus repeats with emphasis in the discourse after the Supper.<sup>79</sup> As the ideal model of this union, He puts before us the unity of the divine persons: “That they may be one, as we also are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.”<sup>80</sup>

This union of all Christians in Himself is the supreme desire of the Lord, and is what He asks from His Father in His last prayer. In order to elevate Christians to this height, He reveals Himself and also the Father: “I have made known thy name to them, and will make it known, that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them” (xvii, 26). That is the last word in this prayer; in beginning it, Jesus had likewise said: “This is eternal life: That they may know thee, the only true God, and him whom thou hast sent” (xvii, 3).

This revelation is not yet completed: Jesus has hidden from the Apostles nothing that they could bear, but there are many mysteries which they cannot bear yet (*John* xvi, 12); the Holy Spirit, whom Jesus will send them, will reveal these to them. This will be the great divine gift and the fruit of the death of Christ: until his sacrifice is consummated, the Spirit is not given by God (vii, 39). Thus Jesus can say to the Apostles: “I tell you the truth: it is expedient to you that I go: for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you” (xvi, 7).

Thus these farewells of Jesus to the Apostles, while full of emo-

<sup>78</sup> *John* xv, 4-5. This great law governs all supernatural life. We can receive it only from Christ, but this communication is made chiefly by the Eucharist, and it is to this communication that all the other graces and all the other sacraments are orientated as to their end. Cf. De La Taille, *Mysterium Fidei*, pp. 557-88.

<sup>79</sup> “A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another” (*John* xiii, 34-5). “This is my commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (xv, 12-13). “These things I command you, that you love one another” (xv, 17).

<sup>80</sup> *John* xvii, 22-3; cf. *ibid.*, 21: “That they all may be one, as thou Father in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.” In the unity of this divine nature, Jesus in this discourse after the Supper shows us the Holy Spirit, together with the Son and the Father: xiv, 16-26; xv, 26; xvi, 7-14. Cf. *Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ*, Vol. II, pp. 263-74; *History of the Dogma of the Trinity*, Vol. I, pp. 400-4.

tion and tenderness, are full also of hope; He can say in all truth: "I will not leave you orphans" (xiv, 18): He remains with them, as He will repeat to them after His resurrection, "until the consummation of the world" (*Matt.* xxviii, 20), and He will give them the Holy Spirit.

### *The Passion and Death of Jesus*

From the beginning of His ministry, Jesus appears to us as in conflict with the leaders of the Jewish people. It was to escape from their threats that He had had to leave Jerusalem after a few days, then, a few weeks later, abandon Judea, and finally, at the end of a year, Galilee. During the last year He could not stay long anywhere; He passed along the Phœnician coast, the region of Cæsarea Philippi, the borders of the Lake, Samaria, Judea, Perea, and returned to Jerusalem at the periods of the feasts. At the same time the hatred of His opponents became more threatening; it no longer confined itself, as during the Galilean ministry (*Mark* ii, 6), to hatching plots against Him; it now involved the Sanhedrin. On the motion of the high priest Caiaphas, it was decided to have Him put to death (*John* xi, 49-53), and as He had withdrawn into the desert, orders were given that any man who knew where He was should give information so that He might be arrested (*John* xi, 56).

In view of these extreme measures, it is not the arrest of the Master that astonishes us, but its tardy character. The long hesitation of the enemies of Jesus is explained by the fear of a popular tumult. But that is only a partial explanation: in many cases it cannot be appealed to, as above all in the case of the riots which more than once menaced Jesus at Nazareth (*Luke* iv, 30), or at Jerusalem (*John* viii, 59; x, 39). The ultimate explanation is to be sought in the divine protection which surrounded Him so long as His hour had not come. This is pointed out with emphasis by St. John: "No man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come" (vii, 30; viii, 20). And Jesus said the same to the chief priests and officers of the Temple who arrested Him: "I was daily with you in the Temple, and you did not stretch forth your hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness" (*Luke* xxii, 53).

If this protection now failed Jesus, it was because He Himself had deliberately renounced it. He knew that His hour had come,

the hour which He had had constantly before His eyes, and for which He had come into this world (*John* xii, 27). He knew the will of His Father, and submitted to it: "That the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father hath given me commandment, so do I" (xiv, 31). Saying this, He went forth to the garden, where He knew the traitor was to come to take Him. And even after His arrest, He knew that He had only to will it to escape from His enemies: "Thinkest thou," He said to Peter, "that I cannot ask my Father, and he will give me immediately more than twelve legions of angels? How then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that so it must be done?" (*Matt.* xxvi, 53-54). Jesus, then, sees the divine will, freely accepts it, and gives Himself up: "Therefore doth the Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it up again. No man taketh it away from me, but I lay it down of myself, and I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. This commandment have I received of my Father" (*John* x, 17-18).

### *The Agony in the Garden*

This submission of the Son to the Father was not withheld for a moment, but it had to overcome temptations and terrible trials: not only the attacks of the prince of this world and of his minions, but also of terror and disgust amounting even to agony. The narrative of this intimate struggle that begins the story of the Passion;<sup>81</sup> it is, perhaps, the most moving and revealing page in it. In the scenes which follow, our attention tends to be fixed on the atrocious torture of the scourging and of the Cross, the cries of hatred of the Jews, the cruelty of Pilate, the obstinacy of Caiaphas and the Pharisees. But in the Garden we see neither torturers nor judges: Jesus is alone in presence of His Father, but He bears the weight of the sins of the world, He is crushed by it, and His suffering is such that it causes Him to sweat blood.

Going forth from Jerusalem, Jesus withdrew with His Apostles

<sup>81</sup> *Matt.* xxvi, 36-46; *Mark* xiv, 32-42; *Luke* xxii, 40-46. Cf. *Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ*, Vol. II, pp. 289-321. In this narrative, the two first Synoptics are strictly parallel to each other. Luke departs from them: he does not distinguish the three visits made by Jesus to His Apostles; he reports two things of which he is the only narrator: the visit of the angel, and the sweat of blood. The account of the agony is absent from St. John: on the other hand, he alone reports the first mental anguish of Jesus on the occasion of the entry into Jerusalem (xii, 24-7).

beyond the brook Cedron, to the foot of the Mount of Olives, into the Garden of Gethsemane. He said to His disciples: "While I go yonder, watch and pray." We have seen how Jesus passed the night in prayer on the eve of the great events in His life, but of all these none could be compared with what was to take place on the morrow. This time Jesus did not return alone: He took with Him His three intimate friends, Peter, James and John, so that they should be witnesses of His prayer, and above all to associate them in it: they also, in the course of this night, would be tempted, and to repulse this assault, they would need great strength, and they should pray for this.

"And when he was gone forward a little, he fell flat on the ground; and he prayed, that if it might be, the hour might pass from him. And he saith: 'Abba, Father, all things are possible to thee; remove this chalice from me; but not what I will, but what thou wilt.' And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping. And he saith to Peter: 'Simon, sleepest thou? Couldst thou not watch one hour? Watch ye, and pray, that you enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.' And going away again, he prayed, saying the same words. And when he returned, he found them again asleep (for their eyes were heavy), and they knew not what to answer him. And he cometh the third time, and saith to them: 'Sleep ye now, and take your rest. It is enough; the hour is come: behold the Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise up, let us go. Behold, he that will betray me is at hand'" (*Mark* xiv, 35-41).

This account of the agony of the Lord was a scandal to the pagans. At the end of the second century, Celsus wrote: "If things happened as he willed, if he was stricken in obeying his Father, it is clear that nothing could have been hard or difficult for him, since he was God and willed all that. Why then did he lament? why groan? why did he seek to escape the death which he feared, saying: 'Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me!'" <sup>82</sup>

These objections concern us to-day only because of the attitude of mind they manifest: in this world which was hard and heartless (*Romans* i, 31) this agony, so bitterly felt, so simply described, must have seemed a weakness. The evangelists were aware of this state of mind, but they hid nothing. They narrate with the same transparent sincerity the whole Passion, the weakness of the Apos-

<sup>82</sup> *Apud Origen, Contra Celsum*, II, 21 (Migne, P.G., XI, 841); cf *ibid.*, 9 (808).

bles, and the torments and death of Jesus, just as they here recount His agony. This mystery of suffering and humiliation which had so dismayed the Apostles, and which they could scarcely believe, was to be for every Christian "the power and the wisdom of God" (*I Cor. i, 24*).

Judas arrived, guiding a large body of men armed with swords and staves. The "chief priests, officers of the Temple, and elders" had made up their minds to lead the group; a detachment of Roman soldiers accompanied them to lend them their strong arm. Jesus was before them, walking; Judas gave Him a kiss. Peter attempted to resist by force; Jesus stopped him, and healed Malchus; then He surrendered to His enemies: "The chalice which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" (*John xviii, 11*). The disciples all abandoned Him and fled.

### *Jesus before Annas and Caiphas*

Jesus was taken first to Annas. The old pontiff was no longer high priest, but he had occupied that office for a long time. His five sons succeeded him in it, and this year it was his son-in-law Caiphas who was the supreme pontiff. The head of the family was first given this mark of deference, and then Caiphas had Jesus brought before him, and took the matter of His trial in hand.<sup>83</sup>

He interrogated Jesus "concerning his disciples and his doctrine." As to His disciples, Jesus made no reply, not wishing to compromise anyone; on His doctrine He appealed to His public teaching: "I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in the synagogue and in the Temple, whither all the Jews resort; and in secret I have spoken nothing. Why askest thou me? Ask those who have heard what I have spoken unto them: behold, they know what things I have said." A servant struck Him. Jesus said: "If I have spoken evil, give testimony of the evil; but if well, why strikest thou me?"

This first interrogation made Caiphas realise that the trial was not going to be an easy one: would he be able to overcome the reserve of the accused man, and lead Him on to imprudent declarations, as he hoped? He did not know as yet whether he would

<sup>83</sup> On this succession of the facts, cf. *Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ*, Vol. II. p. 338 and n. 1. We assume here as probable an inversion in ch. xviii of St. John: verse 24 is to be read immediately after v. 13. The text is thus read in the Syriac Sinaiticus and in St. Cyril of Alexandria.

succeed. At least he realised that he would have to prepare with care for the morning session; the rest of the night should be devoted to this. Meanwhile, Jesus was taken to the prison, where He would be at the mercy of the Sanhedrin and their servants. In crossing the courtyard, Jesus turned round and looked at Peter, who had been taken inside by John and interrogated by servants and soldiers, had allowed himself to be intimidated, tried to extricate himself by equivocations, and ended finally in formal denials, oaths, and imprecations. The glance of Jesus aroused him and saved him: he went out weeping bitterly.

At daybreak, Caiphas resumed the interrogation of Jesus.<sup>84</sup> He had gathered together a great number of suborned witnesses; but their evidence did not agree. Two of them brought forward what Jesus had said about the Temple, misrepresenting it. Caiphas realising that all these charges were inconsistent, endeavoured to compromise Jesus by eliciting a reply: "Answerest thou nothing to the things which these witness against thee?" Jesus was silent. Then the high priest, dropping the false witnesses, went straight to the fundamental question, adjuring Jesus in the name of the living God<sup>85</sup> and asking Him: "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?" Jesus answered: "I am he. And you shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven."<sup>86</sup>

This reply of Jesus was bound to lead to sentence of death: He knew this. He seemed to be the plaything of His enemies, constrained by them to this declaration which He had always refused to make. In reality, it was He who had chosen the ground on which He would fall. They wanted to make Him a rebel, a blasphemer against the Temple: all these accusations collapsed; they had to come to the decisive question. Did Jesus claim to be the Messiah, the Son of God? The Jews had not wanted to be taken on to that ground: to condemn Jesus for calling Himself the Messiah was a very dangerous thing: the Messianic claim was not in itself a blasphemy; it could only be so if the Messiah claimed at the same time to be the Son of God; Jesus had implied this publicly, for instance, in the parable of the vineyard, but would He repeat it categorically before the Sanhedrin? Everything depended on Him,

<sup>84</sup> *Matt.* xxvi, 59; xxvii, 2; *Mark* xiv, 53; xv, 1; *Luke* xxii, 54; xxiii, 1.

<sup>85</sup> *Matt.* xxvi, 63.

<sup>86</sup> *Mark* xiv, 61-2; cf. *Matt.* xxvi, 63-4; *Luke* xxii, 66-71.

and He had always been so circumspect and so completely in control of His speech that His enemies might well fear that this time again He would refuse them the affirmation which would destroy Him. Another fear haunted them: was it not, with regard to the people, a terrible responsibility to condemn to death someone who had certainly said that He was the Messiah and the Son of God, but who had, after all, upheld His claim by so many miracles? Might they not be reproached with having destroyed the hope of Israel?<sup>87</sup>

This last fear was only too well founded; but, determined on the death of Jesus, they set it aside. And they did not encounter the obstacle which they had feared: hitherto all their questions had failed in presence of the silence of Christ; now the time had come to speak: adjured in the name of the living God, by the high priest, before the sovereign council of His nation, Jesus gave the answer. He, the first of martyrs, willed to give the testimony which would cause His death, but would also found the faith of the Church.<sup>88</sup>

As soon as this reply of Jesus was heard, the high priest rent his garments, and said: "What further need have we of witnesses? You have heard the blasphemy. What think you?" And all answered: "He is worthy of death."<sup>89</sup>

### *Jesus before Pilate and Herod*

After spitting in the face of Jesus and buffeting and striking Him, they led Him to Pilate.<sup>90</sup>

They themselves set forth quite clearly the motive of this step: "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death" (*John* xviii, 31). In their eyes the case was finished, but the sentence which they had passed was without legal force; it was necessary that Pilate should condemn Jesus; all their efforts were to be directed to this end.

<sup>87</sup> We may recall what St. Paul was to say to the Jews in Rome: "For the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain" (*Acts* xxviii, 20).

<sup>88</sup> On this supreme testimony, cf. L. de Grandmaison, *Jesus Christ*, Vol. II, pp. 167-73.

<sup>89</sup> *Matt.* xxvi, 65-6; *Mark* xiv, 63-4.

<sup>90</sup> The Jewish historian Juster (*Les Juifs dans l'empire romain*, Vol. II, p. 134) has endeavoured to free the Jewish nation from any responsibility for the condemnation of Jesus, and to put it on Pilate alone; he has been followed by Loisy, in his edition of the *Acts*, p. 309. Nothing justifies this distortion of the Gospel narrative. Cf. *Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ*, Vol. II, pp. 330-2, 359-60.

The Procurator had been in office for four years; he knew enough of Jerusalem and Judea to understand that the accusations which echoed before his tribunal arose from the jealousy of the Sanhedrin. Full of contempt for the Jews, he decided without hesitation to deal severely with them: he had given an example of this quite recently in the affair of the Galileans, whose blood he had mingled with their sacrifices;<sup>91</sup> but he did not intend to be an instrument of Jewish hatred. He would willingly have done what Gallio did at Corinth twenty years later (*Acts* xviii, 14-17), and have dismissed both accusers and accused. He attempted this, but the Sanhedrin, more insistent and more powerful than the Jews of Corinth, forced his hand.

They had condemned Jesus for blasphemy; they kept this religious point in the background at first, and accused Jesus of being a rebel, a pretender to the kingdom, who had upset all Judea from Galilee to Jerusalem. Pilate had a police force sufficiently vigilant to know what reliance was to be placed on this, but all the same he interrogated Jesus, convinced himself that the kingdom which He claimed was not of this world, and that Rome had nothing to fear from Him. Hearing Galilee mentioned, he took the occasion to send Jesus to Herod, who was then at Jerusalem.<sup>92</sup>

Herod had for a long time sought to see Jesus (*Luke* ix, 9). His frivolous curiosity, which had on some occasions taken pleasure in listening to John the Baptist, desired to see Jesus. The Master had always kept away from him, and but lately He had spoken severely of "that fox" (*Luke* xiii, 31). But now, in the extreme danger in which He was placed, the Galilean prophet would doubtless fall in with his wishes. Herod hoped this would be so, and rejoiced to see Him. But though he plied Jesus with questions, he received no answer at all. Herod felt hurt, and in derision gave to this king of the Jews a white robe, and sent Him back to Pilate.

The trial then recommenced, and in more unhappy circumstances for the Procurator, whose weakness was known to the Jews. In vain did he use the most miserable and cruel expedients; in vain he called upon the Jews to choose between Jesus and Barabbas, had Jesus scourged and then presented Him to the mob disfigured and

<sup>91</sup> *Luke* xiii, 1. Cf. *Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ*, Vol. II, pp. 355-8.

<sup>92</sup> This appearance of Jesus before Herod is related only by *Luke* (xxiii, 4-12); it has been called in question, but unreasonably. Cf. *Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ*, Vol. II, p. 365 and n. 1.



with a crown of thorns, saying to them: "Behold the man!" The shouts redoubled: "Crucify him! crucify him!" Pilate had wished to evoke pity; he had merely encouraged their hatred. Being weary, and hating the whole thing, he replied: "Take you him, and crucify him: I find no fault in him." "We have a law," replied the Jews, "and according to this law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God."

Before Pilate, as in the Sanhedrin, they had been led in spite of themselves on to that religious ground where Jesus stood and where they did not wish to follow. Later on St. Peter will say to the Christians: "Let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or a railer, or a coveter of other men's things. But if as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name" (*I Peter*, iv, 15-16). Similarly, Jesus Himself was not condemned for having caused a popular rising, or for preventing the payment of tribute to Cæsar. The decisive ground, before the Sanhedrin and before Pilate, was His divine Sonship.

Pilate became frightened. He resumed his questioning: "Whence art thou?" Jesus was silent. "Speakest thou not to me? Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee?" "Thou shouldst not have any power against me, unless it were given thee from above." Pilate, alarmed at the responsibility which he began to realise, sought from that time to stop the case; it was too late. "If thou release this man, thou art not Cæsar's friend. For whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cæsar."

In face of this threat Pilate ceased to struggle any longer. He took his seat on his tribunal, and had Jesus brought forth: "Behold your king!"—"Away with him, away with him, crucify him!"—"Shall I crucify your king?"—"We have no king but Cæsar!" Then he delivered Him to be crucified.<sup>93</sup>

### *The Death on the Cross*

Together with Jesus, two thieves were sent to their death. Escorted by Roman soldiers headed by a centurion, the three con-

<sup>93</sup> *John* xix, 1-16. To this narrative of St. John's we may add a feature reported by *Matt.* xxvii, 24-25: Pilate, feeling overwhelmed by the growing tumult, and being no longer able to make himself heard, had water brought to him, and washed his hands in the presence of the people, saying: "I am innocent of the blood of this just man: look you to it." And the whole people answering, said: "His blood be upon us and upon our children."

demned men, carrying their crosses, made their way to Golgotha, a rocky mound outside the city, quite close to the ramparts.<sup>94</sup>

Slowly the funeral procession threaded its way through the narrow streets filled with the crowds of Paschal pilgrims. Jesus, exhausted by the scourging, collapsed under the weight of the cross; Simon of Cyrene was told to carry it, and they set out once more. "And there followed him a great multitude of people, and of women, who bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning to them said: 'Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not over me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. . . . If in the green wood they do these things, what shall be done in the dry?'" (*Luke* xxiii, 27-30). They arrived at Calvary, and Jesus and the two thieves were nailed to the crosses. During this torture, Jesus prayed: "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do" (*Luke* xxiii, 33).

Then the soldiers divided His vesture, and drew lots for His tunic. Jesus was dying; the crowd watched Him; passers by insulted Him; they knew Him only through the echoes of the trial, which they repeated: "Vah, thou that destroyest the temple of God and in three days buildest it up again; Save thyself, coming down from the cross" (*Mark* xv, 29-30). The leaders mockingly said to one another: "He saved others; himself he cannot save. Let Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe!" (*Ibid.*, 31-32). The soldiers joined in: "If thou be the King of the Jews, save thyself!" (*Luke* xxiii, 37). And similarly one of the thieves: "If thou be the Christ, save thyself and us." But the other reproved him: "Neither dost thou fear God, seeing that thou art under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done no evil. Lord, remember me when thou shalt come into thy kingdom."—"To-day," replied Jesus, "thou shalt be with me in paradise" (*Luke* xxiii, 39-43).

Darkness covered the land, there was silence around the cross, and the little group of faithful souls drew closer:

"There stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalen. When Jesus therefore had

<sup>94</sup> On the site of Calvary, see Vincent, *Jérusalem*, Vol. II, pp. 89 *et seq.*: "Leaving aside the proofs till later, we will remark here that the authenticity of Calvary and the Holy Sepulchre is vested with the best guarantees of certainty which could be desired in such a subject." Cf. Dalman, *Les itinéraires de Jésus*, ch. xxi, *Golgotha et le tombeau*, pp. 449-96.

seen his mother and the disciple standing whom he loved, he saith to his mother: 'Woman, behold thy son.' After that, he saith to the disciple: 'Behold thy mother.' And from that hour, the disciple took her to his own" (*John* xix, 25-27).

Then, in the silence a great cry resounded: "Eloi, eloi, lama sabachthani?" These are in Aramaic the first words of Psalm xxi: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" On the threshold of His ministry, it was by the oracles of the Bible that Jesus had repulsed the temptations; in this hour of agony, it was from the Psalms that He borrowed His prayer; the Gospel has conserved only the first verse, but Jesus doubtless continued the recitation of this prophetic psalm, which described in advance the torments of Christ; it begins with a cry of anguish, but finishes with a song of hope and triumph: "Ye that fear Jahveh, praise him! . . . For he hath not slighted, nor despised the supplication of the poor man; neither hath he turned away his face from me, and when I cried to him he heard me."

Another cry was heard from Jesus: "I thirst." The soldiers put to His mouth a sponge filled with vinegar. Jesus said: "All is consummated," and with a loud cry He added: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," and bowing His head He died.

After the death of Jesus, the veil of the Temple was rent, the earth quaked, the rocks were rent, the tombs were opened, and dead saints came forth and walked in the streets of Jerusalem. The centurion cried: "Truly this man was the Son of God," and the crowds who had been present at this spectacle returned to Jerusalem beating their breasts.

A little group of faithful ones remained near the cross: Mary, the mother of Jesus, John His disciple, the holy women who up till recently had served Him in Galilee and had followed Him to Calvary; Mary Magdalen, Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joseph, Salome, and many others who had ascended to Jerusalem with Him (*Mark* xv, 41). Soldiers, sent by Pilate at the request of the Jews, approached the crucified ones, broke the legs of the two thieves, and one of them, seeing that Jesus was already dead, pierced His heart with a lance, and there gushed forth blood and water (*John* xi, 31-37).

Joseph of Arimathea, a member of the Sanhedrin, had obtained from Pilate permission to bury Jesus; he wished to place the body

in the tomb which he had prepared for himself in a garden quite close to Calvary. He came with Nicodemus, who brought a hundred pounds of aromatical spices. They took the body of Jesus, bound it in clothes with the spices, and laid it in the tomb hewn from the rock. The women saw the entombment; returning to Jerusalem they bought spices and perfumes; then they stayed in their homes, because nightfall had come, and the Sabbath had begun.

The next day, the Sabbath day, the chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate and said: "Sir, we have remembered that that seducer said while he was yet alive: 'After three days I will rise again.' Command therefore the sepulchre to be guarded until the third day, lest perhaps his disciples come and steal him away, and say to the people: 'He is risen from the dead,' and the last error shall be worse than the first." Pilate replied: "You have a guard, go, guard it as you know." They therefore made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting guards (*Matt.* xxvii, 62-66).

### *The Resurrection*

As day dawned, the holy women, no longer held back by the Sabbath rest, ran to the tomb, carrying the spices they had bought, in order to complete the burial of Jesus. They were unaware of the presence of the guards, but they remembered that there was a great stone rolled to the entrance of the tomb, and on the way they said to one another: "Who shall roll us back the stone from the door of the sepulchre?"

But looking, they saw that the stone, which was very great, had been rolled on one side. Entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man seated on the right, clothed with a white robe, and they were astonished. But He said to them "Be not affrighted. You seek Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified: he is risen, he is not here. Behold the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples, and Peter, that he goeth before you into Galilee; there you shall see him, as he told you." Then, going out, they fled from the sepulchre, trembling and frightened. And they said nothing to any man, for they were afraid (*Mark* xvi, 1-8).

Mary Magdalen had not stayed with the other women: as soon as she saw that the stone was rolled away and the tomb open, she had but one thought: "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him" (*John* xx,

2). She ran first to tell this to Peter and John; the two Apostles, greatly impressed, ran to the sepulchre. Peter entered first: he examined everything: the winding sheet laid aside, the linen with which the head had been covered, folded on one side. John entered also: he saw, and believed (*ibid.*, 3-10).

Mary had also followed them, but without entering into the sepulchre. Once more she glanced within: she saw two angels seated on the tombstone, one at the head, the other at the feet. "Woman, why weepest thou?" She could only repeat the thought which obsessed her: "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." She turned from the tomb, and saw a man standing close by her; she thought it was the gardener. "Sir, if thou hast taken him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus said to her: "Mary!" She turned to Him and said: "Rabboni!"—"Touch me not," said Jesus to her, "for I am not yet ascended to my Father. But go to my brethren, and say to them: I ascend to my Father and to your Father, to my God and to your God" (*ibid.*, 11-12).

These incidents, which succeeded one another so rapidly on this Paschal morning, reveal to us, through the transparence of the simple and sober narrative, the confusion of the most faithful disciples, whom the death of the Master had shocked, and their slowness to believe. Their love was as ardent as ever, but hope was extinct. The holy women, at the discovery of the displaced stone and of the empty tomb, felt it was just one more blow to discourage them: "They have taken away the Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." Mary Magdalen above all, overwhelmed with sorrow, paid no attention to the angels, and perceived without noticing the One who appeared to her. She was recalled from her sorrow only by the voice of Jesus: the Good Shepherd calls His sheep by their name, and the sheep follow Him, because they know His voice.

### *The Appearances to the Apostles*

The Apostles and the other disciples were, like the holy women, slow to believe. In the course of this day, the disciples from Emmaus were still to say: "Certain women of our company affrighted us, who before it was light, were at the sepulchre, and not finding his body, came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels

who say that he is alive. And some of our people went to the sepulchre, and found it so as the women had said, but him they found not" (*Luke* xxiv, 22-24).

The Apostles were convinced only by the testimony of Peter: "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon";<sup>95</sup> those were the words by which they welcomed the account of the two disciples from Emmaus when these, greatly excited by the appearance of the Lord, came to tell them about it at the Cenacle.<sup>96</sup> And while the two disciples narrated how Jesus had joined them on the road and had talked with them, and how finally they had recognised Him in the breaking of bread, Jesus Himself suddenly appeared in the midst of the Apostles in this upper room with closed doors: "Peace to you. It is I, be not afraid"; and so that they should recognise Him, He showed them His hands and His side. And then again:

"Peace be to you. As the Father hath sent me, I also send you. . . . And he breathed on them, and he said to them: 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.'" <sup>97</sup>

Jesus had told His disciples to return into Galilee. It was there that He promised to meet them,<sup>98</sup> and it was there that several of the most important appearances were to take place. The Apostles did not know the date of the meeting, and meanwhile they gathered round St. Peter and accompanied him when he went fishing. After a night of fruitless labour, Jesus appeared on the bank, was recognised through a miraculous draught of fishes, and after the meal which He took with them, He addressed Himself individually to St. Peter: "Simon, son of John, lovest thou me more than these?"—"Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." Three times did Jesus repeat His question; the third time the Apostle, deeply moved by the Lord's insistence and the memory of his fall, replied: "Lord,

<sup>95</sup> This appearance to St. Peter is one of the most formally attested: by St. Paul (*I Cor.* xv, 5) and by St. Luke (*xxiv*, 34), but it is not recorded in detail.

<sup>96</sup> Cf. *Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ*, Vol. II, pp. 410-11.

<sup>97</sup> *John* xx, 19-25; *Luke* xxiv, 36-43. Eight days later, there was a new appearance in the presence of St. Thomas (*John* xx, 26-9).

<sup>98</sup> This appointment, recorded by *Matt.* xxviii, 7, and *Mark* xvi, 7, is explained by the important appearances which took place in Galilee; it does not efface the express mention of the appearances in Jerusalem. Cf. *Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ*, Vol. II, pp. 417-20. [See also article by E. C. Messenger in *Clergy Review* for April, 1941, "The Appearances of the Risen Jesus."]

thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." This triple confession was rewarded by a triple investiture: "Feed my lambs," said Jesus to him, and then twice: "Feed my sheep." And to the Apostle thus reinstated before all and confirmed in his office as shepherd and head, Christ foretold the martyrdom which awaited him: "Thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee and lead thee whither thou wouldst not" (*John* xxi, 10-24).

A little while, apparently, after this appearance there took place the most solemn manifestation of all, which is related by St. Matthew (xxviii, 16-20):

"The eleven disciples went into Galilee, unto the mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And seeing him they adored; but some doubted. And Jesus coming, spoke to them, saying: 'All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. Going therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.'

On the occasion of their first mission, Jesus had said to the Apostles: "Go ye not into the way of the Gentiles, and into the city of the Samaritans enter ye not, but go ye rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (*Matt.* x, 5-6). Now all the barriers were removed: the Apostles were sent to all nations. This universal mission is given in virtue of a sovereign power: "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth." All this was the fruit of the Passion of Christ: "When I shall be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all things to myself." And in this tremendous task Jesus will be with His Apostles, with the Church, till the end of the world.

### *The Ascension*

One last mystery consecrates and transfigures all this teaching of the Son of God here below: his Ascension. Quite recently He had said to the Jews: "You are from beneath, I am from above" (*John* viii, 23), and to Nicodemus He had said: "No man hath ascended into heaven but he that descended from heaven, the Son of Man" (iii, 13); and to His hearers at Capharnaum: "Does this scandalise you? If then you shall see the Son of Man ascend up where he was before?" (vi, 62). In these various ways Jesus directed towards heaven the dawning faith of those who were

listening to Him. The same teaching was to be given to the Apostles, to the whole Church, and in so clear a light that they would never forget it.

The Apostles had returned to Jerusalem. Once more Jesus came amongst them; He shared their repast; He requested them to remain at Jerusalem and to await there the Holy Spirit whom He had promised them in the name of the Father. Even then the Apostles could not forget their dream of national restoration: "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"—"It is not for you," the Lord replied to them, "to know the times or moments, which the Father hath put in his own power. But you shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you, and you shall be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and even to the uttermost part of the earth" (*Acts i, 4-8*).

While this conversation was going on, they had arrived at the top of the Mount of Olives. Forty days earlier, Jesus and His Apostles had followed the same route; the Master was then going to the garden of the agony; the Apostles, to the supreme test which was to overcome them and disperse them. Now all was restored for ever, and Jesus ascended to heaven.

"And when he had said these things, while they looked on, he was raised up: and a cloud<sup>99</sup> received him out of their sight. And while they were beholding him going up to heaven, behold two men stood by them in white garments. Who also said: 'Ye men of Galilee, why stand you looking up to heaven? This Jesus who is taken from you into heaven, shall so come, as you have seen him going into heaven'" (*Acts i, 9-11*).

The Apostles returned joyfully to Jerusalem; but the memory of this vision did not depart from them. To their faithful disciples they would say with St. Paul: "Seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God, mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth" (*Col. iii, 1-2*). The Holy Ghost was to come, revealing to them this wide horizon: henceforth there would be question not of the kingdom of Israel but of the kingdom from on high, where Jesus was enthroned and awaited them.

<sup>99</sup> The cloud is the mysterious veil which hides God from man. It was in the cloud that God appeared in the Old Testament; it is from a cloud that He spoke at the baptism and at the Transfiguration of the Master. The cloud of the Ascension gave the Apostles to understand that Jesus is henceforth entered into His glory, and that it is by faith, under a veil, that we can attain to Him here below.



# THE PREACHING OF THE APOSTLES, AND THE BEGINNINGS OF THE CHURCH<sup>1</sup>

## § I. PENTECOST

### *The Book of the Acts*

THE public life of Christ was from the earliest years of the Church the subject of the apostolic catechesis, and our synoptic gospels are the echo of this preaching; they present themselves to us as the testimony which the Church gives to her Lord. The Book of the Acts has not the same character; it is the personal work of St. Luke. The sacred writer has brought to his task not only a conscientious probity, but a pious veneration. The history of the first years of the Church is dear to him and sacred. At the same time, he himself weaves the web; this history is truly his work.

It is moreover an outline rather than a complete history. We know very little of these first years of the Church, but we know enough to realise that St. Luke has not told us everything. The Epistle to the Romans and the narrative of the Acts itself (ch. xxviii) bear witness to the existence of a church at Rome. We would like to know about its origin and its development; the *Acts* tell us nothing. The Epistles of St. Paul show us many features in

<sup>1</sup> Bibliography.—C. Fouard, *St. Peter and the First Years of Christianity*; Mgr. Le Camus, *L'œuvre des apôtres*, Paris, 1905, 3 vols.; E. Jacquier, *Les Actes des apôtres*, Paris, 1926; A. Boudou, *Actes des apôtres*, Paris, 1933; A. Wikenhauser, *Die Apostelgeschichte und ihr Geschichtswert*, Münster, 1921. The preceding are Catholic works. The following are by non-Catholics: C. Weiszaecker, *Das apostolische Zeitalter*, Tübingen, 1886, 3rd edn., 1902; J. Weiss, *Das Urchristentum*, Göttingen, 1917; A. C. MacGiffert, *History of Christianity in the Apostolic Age*, Edinburgh, 1897; F. J. Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake, *Beginnings of Christianity*, London, 1920-33, 5 vols., the first two contain prolegomena, the third an edition of the *Acts*, the last two, notes and studies on the *Acts*; E. Meyer, *Ursprung und Anfänge des Christentums*, Stuttgart, 1921-3, 3 vols., the first is devoted to the Gospels, the second to Judaism and to Jesus of Nazareth, the third to the *Acts*, and the history of Christian origins; W. Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, Göttingen, 1913, 2nd edn., 1921.

the life of the Apostle that St. Luke has passed over in silence.<sup>2</sup>

The title itself of the book must not deceive us: it is not the acts of all the Apostles that are given therein; Peter fills the first chapters, Paul all the rest. The other Apostles hardly appear at all. In the first part of the book, the most active missionaries are persons in the second rank: Stephen, Philip, Barnabas. These lacunæ were later on greatly regretted, and some endeavoured to fill the gap by apocryphal Acts. In the choice made by the author of the Acts we must doubtless see a consequence of the conditions in which he found himself: Luke had been a companion of St. Paul and during his stay at Cæsarea, he had known Philip, and similarly at Antioch he had been close to Barnabas. Above all we must not forget that this book, like all those in the New Testament, is not designed to satisfy curiosity by the mere narration of facts, however interesting these may be, but it sets out to uphold and to illumine the faith. Luke pursues this end by describing first of all the origins of the Church at Jerusalem, and then its wonderful expansion, which he himself witnessed and helped to bring about.

### *The First Years: Their Character*

Before entering into the details of this history, one is struck with certain features which are evident at first sight, and which characterise these first years of the infant Church immediately after the death of Jesus. The first is the immense void created by the departure of the Master. We shall never again find in the history of the Church a personality comparable to that of Christ. St. John says of the Baptist: "He was not the light, but was to give testimony of the light." The same applies here: the Apostles, even the greatest, were not the light; they reflected it, they propagated it, but they were not its source. Never again will be heard that sovereign voice of someone speaking in His own name, who commands by His own authority, who claims for Himself the complete surrender of men's souls. This fact is a very obvious one, but there is nevertheless none which has greater consequences.

Another characteristic also strikes us: the development of Christianity was a slow progress, without leaps and bounds, without haste, and even without a plan preconceived by men; the Apostles did not anticipate the action of the Holy Spirit; they waited for

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *infra*, ch. iii, "The Missions of St. Paul."

it, they accepted it, they submitted to it; they collaborated with it docilely. They retained from Judaism all that was not incompatible with the Christian faith; they were assiduous in attending the Temple and in public prayer, deferential to the authorities of their nation, while claiming the inalienable freedom of their ministry. Their preaching was prudent without being weak, and based itself on the Jewish faith in order to raise men's souls by degrees to Christ. They were indeed the disciples of the humble and gentle Messias, who did not break the bruised reed, and did not quench the smoking flax, and one is surprised to find men hitherto violent and impulsive, and all more or less "sons of thunder," so faithful to the spirit of the gospel. But while we admire in these facts the wisdom of Christ and the unction of the Spirit, we must at the same time notice the fidelity of the narrator, who sets forth a past so rapidly and so profoundly transformed, with such truthfulness.

### *The Apostles in Jerusalem*

The prelude to this history is the account of the Ascension of the Lord.<sup>3</sup> This manifestation of the glory of Christ is henceforth for the Apostles one of the high lights of their faith; it encouraged them to aspire to heaven, "where Christ is seated at the right hand of God"; it sustained their hope, for they knew that He would come again from heaven whither He had gone. This return which they awaited with an infallible certitude and with much impatience ought to find them watchful. They laboured accordingly as faithful servants whom the coming of the Master ought not to surprise, as friends who had now only one desire, to be with the Lord.

They returned to Jerusalem. This gathering and stay constitute one of the most indisputable facts in the history of Christian origins, and one of those which show most clearly a commandment by Christ. The Apostles were Galileans (i, 11; ii, 7); they were fishermen for the most part; nothing could keep them at Jerusalem except the order of Jesus; they had nothing to do there except to give testimony of Him. And yet it is certain that they were there, and that they remained there. The history of the infant Church unfolds itself far from Galilee, Capharnaum, the Lake, and from all that had provided the framework for the activity of Jesus. Everything took place at Jerusalem. This was due to a commandment of the

<sup>3</sup> We have commented on it above (p. 160).

Lord, reported by St. Luke (i, 4-8): Jerusalem was for the Apostles the scene of the death of Jesus and the centre of the power of His enemies; neither their memories nor their safety would lead them to remain there. But it was there that the Lord wanted them to be; they had to make a supreme effort to save the "city of the great King." Doubtless it would perish, but at least a good number of its children would escape from the catastrophe; the Church would be for them the ark of salvation. While the ark was being built, during the first years at any rate, the little community at Jerusalem enjoyed a certain toleration. The Apostles were ill-treated, and insulted, but not persecuted to death. When the persecution broke out, striking St. Stephen and the Hellenes, the Church had already been able to establish itself and to take root.

The first event which is reported to us, even before Pentecost, is the election of St. Matthias (i, 15-26). This fact is revealing in more than one way: it shows in the first place the importance attached to the apostolic college: the defection of Judas had left a vacancy in it; this had to be filled without delay. What were required in a candidate were doubtless moral qualities, but these were taken for granted and were probably to be found in all those who might have been chosen; above all was required the personal knowledge of Jesus, of whom every Apostle had to be a witness, and be content to be just that. The Apostles, in fact, were not independent masters; they had present before their minds the precept of the Lord: "You have but one master, Christ." Never would they put forth their authority as independent, never would they set up their own thrones. Their testimony was to deal with the whole public life of Christ "from the baptism of John until the Ascension." The rest, the years of His infancy and the hidden life, were at first outside the scope of the apostolic preaching. At the same time, this election not only shows us the indispensable function of an Apostle and the law which governed his office, but it also brings out the primacy of Peter: it was he who took the initiative in this matter and who directed it. In point of fact, the whole history of these early years shows quite clearly this primacy.<sup>4</sup> The disciples presented two candidates, Joseph and Matthias, but did not choose between them; the choice belonged to the Lord. He alone could appoint the Apostles; to find out His will prayer was made, and

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Weiszaecker, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-13; Wernle, *Die Anfänge unserer Religion*, p. 85, and *infra*, ch. vi. § 2.

recourse was had to the drawing of lots. This manner of election was motived by the exceptional character of the apostolate; we shall not find it again. Thus was St. Matthias designated, and given a place alongside the eleven Apostles.

This election took place in the "upper room" <sup>5</sup> where the Church was assembled; the Apostles dwelt there, and with them, persevering in prayer, were Mary the Mother of Jesus, and holy women, and the brethren of the Lord, numbering in all a hundred and twenty persons (i, 15). This was the first nucleus of the Church, the little flock which Jesus had gathered round Him, and which His memory kept united.<sup>6</sup>

### *Pentecost*

On Pentecost Day, "suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind coming, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them parted tongues as it were of fire, and it sat upon every one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they began to speak with divers tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak" (ii, 1-4).

On that day the Church was founded. Thirty years earlier the Holy Ghost had descended upon the Virgin Mary, and she had conceived the Son of God; to-day the Holy Ghost descended anew on Mary, on the Apostles, and on all the disciples gathered together in the cenacle, and of these people it formed the Church, the mystical body of Christ.

This out-pouring of the Spirit was to be one of the features of the Messianic age. On the Messiah Himself the Spirit was to descend and to remain (*Isaias* xi, 2; xlii, 1 *et seq.*); but It was also to spread around Him: "I will give you a new heart, and put a new spirit within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your

<sup>5</sup> Was this room, called "cenaculum" by the Vulgate, the cenacle in which Our Lord had celebrated the Last Supper? It may have been, but there is no proof of this. All that St. Luke says is that the room served as a dwelling for the Apostles. It has been suggested that it was in the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark, where later (xii, 12) we find the Apostles assembled; but this hypothesis is equally gratuitous.

<sup>6</sup> There were even at this time other disciples of the Lord; an appearance of Christ was witnessed by more than five hundred disciples (*I Cor.* xv, 6); the preaching of the Apostles was soon to strengthen these in the faith and to gather them together; but in these days of waiting, the majority were scattered in various places, and only a hundred and twenty were gathered together in the cenacle.

flesh, and will give you a heart of flesh, and I will put my spirit in the midst of you, and I will cause you to walk in my commandments, and to keep my judgments and do them"; "I will pour out upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of prayers."<sup>7</sup> Jesus had repeated these promises;<sup>8</sup> but His death alone could bring about this effect; until then, "as yet the Spirit was not given."<sup>9</sup> Now Jesus was dead, He had been glorified, He had left His own; and according to His promise He sends them the Holy Spirit.

This gift of the Holy Spirit will be constantly renewed in the Church: "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (*Romans* viii, 9). The effusion of the Spirit on the centurion Cornelius and the pagans around him was to be for St. Peter the decisive proof of the vocation of the Gentiles: "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptised, who have received the Holy Ghost, as well as we?" (*Acts* x, 47). Indeed, one could not be fully Christian if one had not received this gift: the people of Samaria, converted by St. Philip and baptised by him, had to receive the laying on of hands by the Apostles, and thereby received the Holy Spirit.<sup>10</sup>

Thus this most precious treasure is also the most common: it is not at all reserved to an élite in the Church, it belongs to all Christians. It is true that the Spirit conferred upon all does not impart to all the same gifts, but there is "one and the same Spirit, dividing to every one according as he will" (*I Cor.* xii, 11).

The Pentecostal effusion did not only bring about an inner transformation of souls; it had also a great external effect. This was felt already on this day at Jerusalem. The festival had attracted to the holy city people from "every nation under heaven." The great noise which had resounded in the cenacle caused them to come together; approaching the cenacle they were astonished, each one hearing the disciples speaking in his own tongue. Some marvelled, others were scornful: "these men are full of new wine."<sup>11</sup> In the

<sup>7</sup> *Ezechiel* xxxvi, 26; *Zacharias* xii, 10; cf. *Isaias* xxxii, 15; xlv, 1 *et seq.*

<sup>8</sup> *John* vii, 38; xiv, 16; xvi, 7.

<sup>9</sup> *John* vii, 39.

<sup>10</sup> *Acts* viii, 17; cf. xix, 2.

<sup>11</sup> These contradictory reactions show that in this first manifestation the gift of tongues was already obscure, as it would be later on at Corinth: "He that speaketh in a tongue, edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth, edifieth the church" (*I Cor.* xiv, 4). The hearers recognised their own tongues, but what they heard were exclamations, praises of God.

same way St. Paul will later on write to the Corinthians: "If all speak with tongues, and there come in unlearned persons or unbelievers, will they not say that you are mad?" (*I Cor.* xiv, 23).

### *St. Peter's Sermon*

In presence of this astonishment and these accusations, St. Peter stands up: he is the prophet who interprets the exclamations of those who have spoken in tongues, but he is above all the head of the Church, defending his brethren and preaching Christ. These praises of God, which have caused wonderment in those who have heard them, are not at all signs of drunkenness; they are the result of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, foretold by the prophet Joel for the last days. These last days, then, have come; it is the hour of salvation:

"Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs . . . being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, you by the hands of wicked men have crucified and slain. Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the sorrows of hell, as it was impossible that he should be holden by it."

After showing that David (*Ps.* xv (xvi), 8-11) foretold the resurrection of Christ by God, Peter continues:

"This Jesus hath God raised again, whereof all we are witnesses. Being exalted therefore to the right hand of God, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath poured forth this which you see and hear. For David ascended not into heaven, but he himself said: 'The Lord said to my Lord, sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy enemies thy footstool.' Therefore let all the house of Israel know most certainly, that God hath made both Lord and Christ, this same Jesus whom you have crucified" (*Acts* ii, 22-36).

This discourse of St. Peter is the earliest piece of apologetics and example of Christian preaching. Its archaic character is a guarantee of its authenticity: at the date when St. Luke wrote the Acts these prudent formulas had long since been left aside; they were already surpassed in this first day of the Church in the faith of St. Peter and the other Apostles. The solemn profession of faith at Cæsarea Philippi: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," is much

more explicit than that which we read here: "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God . . ."; but in these early days of Christian preaching, this is how Messianism was generally presented to the Jews. At the same time it must be noted that, whatever intentional reserve there may be in this preaching, the Messianism which it claims for Jesus, even in this very sermon, is much more transcendent than that of Jewish dreams: with all the precautions of language which were deemed necessary, St. Peter reminds the Jews that King David died and was buried, and that his tomb was in their midst, that he had not ascended to heaven. Jesus on the contrary had risen again and had ascended into heaven, and thus God had shown Him to be Lord and Christ.

Many Jews were impressed, and said to Peter and the Apostles: "What shall we do?" The same question had been put to John the Baptist by the penitents who pressed around him (*Luke* iii, 10 *et seq.*); the Forerunner preached to them justice, and recommended baptism, but only a baptism of water: "I indeed baptise you with water, that he that is mightier than I shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost and with fire (*ibid.*, iii, 16). The day of this baptism had come: "Do penance, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (*Acts* ii, 38).<sup>12</sup> That was how St. Peter answered the question.

### *The First Expansion of the Church*

The converts were obedient to the word of Peter; they received baptism, and in that day about three thousand souls entered the Church.

This effusion of the Holy Spirit, and powerful expansion of the Christian faith, were the first stirrings of a movement of evangelisation which would never cease. St. Peter made this clear at the end of his discourse: "The promise is to you, and to your children, and

<sup>12</sup> The rite of baptism is not described in this text. We know from the *Didache*, vii, 3, that baptism was ordinarily administered by immersion, but that it could in exceptional circumstances be administered by aspersion; this latter rite was most likely used in the case of the baptism of St. Paul (*Acts* ix, 18; xxii, 16), the jailor of Philip, and his family (xvi, 33). Cf. A. d'Alès and J. Coppens, article *Baptême*, in *Supplément to the Dictionnaire de la Bible*. We may remark that St. Peter (*Acts* x, 48) and St. Paul (*I Cor.* i, 14, 17) had baptism administered by others rather than administer it themselves.



to all that are far off, whomsoever the Lord our God shall call" (ii, 39). Those who heard St. Peter were not only Jews of Jerusalem; there were there "Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Lybia about Cyrene, and Romans residing at Jerusalem, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians" (ii, 9-11).

The majority of these people were not resident at Jerusalem; when the feast was ended they would return to their own lands; they would carry there the faith and the gifts of the Holy Spirit which they had just received. They would not be founders of churches, but missionaries; their action would spread abroad the evangelical seed throughout the whole Roman world. We find that, already at the time of the persecution begun at Jerusalem against St. Stephen, there was at Damascus a group of Christians; they were sufficiently well known for Saul to ask and obtain against them powers from the Sanhedrin. A little later we shall find that the Christian faith had been carried to Rome, and probably also to Alexandria. The first diffusion of Christianity was not the work of the Apostles, who remained at Jerusalem; it must be attributed in great measure to the individual action of the pilgrims who had come to Jerusalem, had found there the Christian faith, and had taken it back with them into their own cities and provinces. Thus from the first day of the Church the Gospel parables of the kingdom of God were realised; the grain of mustard seed already put forth its first shoots; the leaven was working not only in the Jewish world but also the Hellenic and Roman worlds, and making it to ferment.

At Jerusalem itself, the Church grew and spread:

"[The disciples] were persevering in the doctrine of the apostles, and in the communication of the breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: many wonders also and signs were done by the apostles. . . . All they that believed were together, and had all things common. Their possessions and goods they sold, and divided them to all, according as every one had need. And continuing daily with one accord in the Temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they took their meat with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord increased daily together such as should be saved" (ii, 42-47).

A little lower, after the account of the miracle in the Temple and of the first persecutions, St. Luke contemplates and describes once more this life of the first Christians:

“The multitude of believers had but one heart and one soul; neither did any one say that aught of the things which he possessed was his own, but all things were common unto them. And with great power did the apostles give testimony of the resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord, and great grace was in them all. For neither was there any one needy among them. For as many as were owners of lands or houses, sold them, and brought the price of the things they sold, and laid it down before the feet of the apostles. And distribution was made to every one, according as he had need” (iv, 32-35).

Some historians have regarded these narratives of conversions and these descriptions of primitive Christian life, as idyllic pictures imagined by St. Luke; the figures, they say, are exaggerated; the sympathy of the people is incredible, as are the miracles of the Apostles.<sup>13</sup> Such criticism is not justified: the numerous conversions and the sympathy of the people can be accounted for by the first-fruits of grace so abundantly showered down, and also by the memory left by the Lord Jesus at Jerusalem; His discourses, His works, still lived in all men's minds; the miracles and the words of Peter revived the recollection, and those who a little while previously had been profoundly touched were once more affected by this preaching which was so simple and so effective, and above all by this life in which the faithful Israelites saw the ideal of the religious life to which they themselves aspired.

The Church of all time will venerate these admirable pictures as a model of Christian life; it will nevertheless recognise that even in this clearness of the early days there were shadows: what will be said soon about neglected widows and murmurings shows that even then human weakness made itself felt, and that it would be an exaggeration to take all the expressions literally, such as for instance this one: “there were no needy amongst them.” In spite of these human failings which will soon be accentuated, we find in this life of the first Christians the most faithful realisation of the Gospel morality as the Lord had taught it in His Sermon on the Mount and particularly in the beatitudes; very likely the form

<sup>13</sup> Weiszaecker, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-3; Renan, *Les apôtres*, p. 48.

which the beatitudes take in Luke bear the trace of this voluntary and joyful poverty.

### *The Life of the Christians*

We should like to penetrate beyond this outline into this life that we glimpse, at least to the extent of determining its chief features. In this assembly of the disciples, the Apostles are seen to be the leaders; they are above all witnesses to Christ, but they are also the spiritual guides and even the administrators of the Christian Church; they will soon have to give up this charge. Their external activity is shown in the discourse of St. Peter; every opportunity is seized to make known Jesus, His position as Messiah, and His resurrection. The three discourses which are reported here arise from the effusion of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost (ii, 14-40), the healing of the lame man (iii, 12-26), and the summoning before the Sanhedrin (iii, 8-12). Such facts, however, were exceptional. The daily influence of the Apostles was doubtless more discreet, affecting each individual or at least each family in the intimacy of its domestic life, preaching to the ear more often than from the housetops.

Besides the great apologetical discourses, we must not forget the apostolic catechesis which is made known to us by the Gospels: the life of Jesus "from the baptism of John until the Ascension," His teaching and His miracles were the subject of the daily instructions by which the new disciples were initiated into the Gospel. How many words of Christ come back to our memories when we consider these first Christians? Before all, the Sermon on the Mount and the beatitudes, but also many other sentences such as: "Come to me, all you that labour, and are burdened, and I will refresh you; take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, because I am meek, and humble of heart, and you shall find rest to your souls, for my yoke is sweet, and my burden light" (*Matt.* xi, 28-30). "Fear not, little flock, for it hath pleased your Father to give you a kingdom. Sell what you possess and give alms. Make to yourselves bags which grow not old, a treasure in heaven which faileth not: where no thief approacheth, nor moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." (*Luke* xii, 32-34).

The Christians were at first called "disciples," as they had been while Jesus was alive; then they were called "brethren" or "saints,"

as we see already in the narratives in the Acts, and constantly in the epistles of St. Paul. To the first term corresponds the collective appellation of the "community" (κοινωτία); to the second, that of the "church."<sup>14</sup>

To people outside they still appear as a sect, ἑρπες (xxiv, 5, 14). They do not seem to have formed a separate synagogue; at the beginning they assembled in the cenacle, a little later we find them all together in the Temple, in Solomon's Porch (v. 12; iii, 11). This was a public place, but no others dared to join them; when Peter and John, after their appearance before the Sanhedrin, returned to their own people, they "prayed, and the place wherein they were assembled was moved" (iv, 31); this place is not otherwise specified. The breaking of bread takes place at home (ii, 46); already we notice, side by side with general assemblies, domestic meetings.

These repasts seem to have had a liturgical character; but they were also occasions for the organisation of mutual assistance: Christians "had but one heart and one soul," and "all things were common unto them" (iv, 32, cf. ii, 44). The Lord had established this rule for His Apostles; He had called upon them to leave all things in order to follow Him; similarly He had said to the rich young man: "Go, sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor . . ." This teaching was certainly recalled by the evangelical catechesis, and it bore its fruit: "As many as were owners of lands or houses, sold them, and brought the price of the things they sold, and laid it down before the feet of the Apostles" (iv, 34-35). The example of Barnabas is given as a model (iv, 37); the history of Ananias and Sapphira (v, 1-11) shows with what severity God punished deception, but, as we see from this account, this practice of poverty was spontaneous, and imposed by no law (v, 4); in these two guilty persons, what was punished was dissimulation and lying. It is likely that in the Church at Jerusalem those who made rich offerings were rare; more numerous were those who had to be assisted by the community. Very soon, even the community was not sufficient for its needs, and other Christians had to come to its assistance. Paul collected for the saints in Jerusalem and for its poor.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> The name "saints" belongs rather to liturgical language. On the primitive sense of the term, see Delehaye, *Sanctus*, Brussels, 1927, pp. 28 *et seq.*; R. Asting, *Die Heiligkeit im Urchristentum*, Göttingen, 1930, pp. 133-51.

<sup>15</sup> I Cor. xvi, 1-3; II Cor. ix, 1; Gal. ii, 10; Rom. xv, 26.

This help was inspired not only by a spirit of solidarity, but above all by brotherly love,<sup>16</sup> and also by contempt for the goods of this world, this mammon of iniquity which could at least enable one to make sure of friends in heaven.

All this shows a very vigorous life. It was not individualistic, as some imagine; never was seen a church more intimately united, even as far as the fusing of personal interests; it was not anarchical; hierarchical authority was binding on all; Christians of good will ranked themselves around it; those who tried to deceive it were really lying to the Holy Ghost, and were struck dead. Everywhere we find an overflowing life; it is the fulfilling of the promise of Jesus: "He that believeth in me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (*John* vii, 38).

### *The Action of the Spirit*

The whole Church was conscious of this constant direction by the Spirit and relied on it: the gravest decisions concerning the evangelisation of the pagans, or the observance or abandonment of the mosaic rites, were made from day to day under the evident pressure of circumstances according to the inspiration of the Spirit of Jesus, and there is no suggestion of a plan drawn up in advance. Jesus had said: "When they shall bring you into the synagogues, and to magistrates and powers . . . the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what you must say" (*Luke* xii, 11-12). This promise was fulfilled in the letter when the Apostles were taken before the Sanhedrin, but it was realised also every day in the life of the Church. This plasticity and suppleness gave to the infant Church a facility for adaptation and in consequence a triumphant power and an assurance of permanence which might well reveal even to outsiders the living treasure which it possessed; and those who lived thereby knew well that it arose not from a fragile enthusiasm, and still less from an eschatological frenzy, but from the living union of the Church with Christ its Head and with the Holy Spirit.

In describing this intimate life, we have left on one side the account of miracles: one only is related in detail, but many others are mentioned in passing (v, 12, 15-16). This profusion of miracles is

<sup>16</sup> *John* xiii, 35; Weiszaecker, *op. cit.*, p. 47, remarks that this love was foreign to official Judaism; he finds some traces of it in Essenism. Certainly one finds a communal life there, but not this tenderness and intimacy of brotherly love.

not astonishing in the beginning of a work the development of which was so wonderful and so manifestly divine. The healing of the lame man is narrated at length (iii, 1-10); it attracts the attention of the writer mainly because of the consequences to which it led, the excitement of the crowd, Peter's exhortation, and the measures taken by the Sanhedrin. The fact, in its general character and in its details, is very similar to many of the miracles reported by St. John, for instance the healing of the paralytic in the pool of Bezatha or that of the man born blind. In all these cases the initiative in the miracle comes not from the sick man, who does not dream of asking for it, but from the Lord, and in this case from St. Peter; and the faith is the fruit of the miracle: here the lame man when healed joins the Apostles and glorifies God; the whole crowd is astonished; Peter takes the opportunity of preaching to them.

### *The First Persecutions*

The chief priests and the Sadducees were alarmed, and had the Apostles arrested. The scribes and the Pharisees did not intervene here, as they did against Jesus. In these early years the enemies of the Church of Jerusalem were mainly the Sadducees.<sup>17</sup> It was they who had played the decisive part in the trial of Christ; the preaching of the Apostles was therefore particularly unwelcome to them: it revived the political difficulties which they thought they had escaped by putting Jesus to death, it incriminated the judgment which they had passed, and lastly it affirmed in a concrete case, well known to all, the doctrine of the resurrection which they obstinately rejected.

Thus, in the interrogation and in the sentence (iv, 7, 18), they brought up none of the accusations constantly made against Jesus by the Pharisees concerning the Sabbath and the Law; they fastened only on the name of Jesus: they absolutely forbade the Apostles to speak and teach in this name.

After this sentence and the bold reply of the Apostles, preaching began again, and with it the diffusion of Christianity. The Apostles were thrown into prison; an angel delivered them and instructed them to preach once more in the Temple; at once they were arrested but without violence, for fear of the people (v, 26). In the Sanhe-

<sup>17</sup> The Pharisees nevertheless very soon supported them, as we shall see in the history of Saul.

drin, the high priest questioned them: "We commanded you that you should not teach in this name, and behold, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and you have a mind to bring the blood of this man upon us." The reply of Peter and the Apostles was: "We ought to obey God rather than men." The Sanhedrin, very angry, wanted to put them to death. On the intervention of Gamaliel they abandoned the idea; they had the Apostles scourged, and forbade them once more to speak in the name of Jesus. The Apostles withdrew, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus.

These first conflicts were but a foretaste of the persecution which was soon to break out; but already we perceive in the Apostles the power of the Holy Spirit promised by Jesus a little while before; the priests were surprised to find such assurance in unlettered men whom they thought they could easily intimidate (iv, 13); after the scourging it was still more astonishing to find such a joy in men recently so weak.

Another point which clearly appears in this struggle is that the one object with which it was concerned was Jesus, his person and His name.<sup>1</sup> The Jews regarded the Church merely as the party of the old disciples of Jesus; the Christians themselves were conscious of being only His witnesses, and when soon afterwards Saul persecuted them, it was Jesus whom he persecuted, and who intervened to defend them.

## § 2. THE MARTYRDOM OF ST. STEPHEN AND THE CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL

### *The Hellenists*

"In those days, the number of the disciples increasing, there arose a murmuring of the Greeks against the Hebrews, for that their widows were neglected in the daily ministration" (vi, 1). This incident is reported by St. Luke only in order to explain the institution of deacons, and the office of St. Stephen, but it is of great interest in itself, and it would be desirable to know more about it. The first nucleus of the faithful had been formed of Galileans; the preaching at Pentecost had led into the Church Jews from all lands, and amongst them, Hellenists. Since then, the influence of these

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, pp. 224 *et seq.*

first converts had made itself felt round about; conversions had multiplied amongst the Hellenists, and yet the heads of the Church were all Hebrews. This led to the fact that in the organisation of assistance, mentioned here for the first time, the widows of the Hellenists were neglected; bonds of relationship and of language favoured the Judeans and tended to isolate the Hellenists.

We understand these difficulties better when we remember how the Jews grouped themselves in their synagogues according to their origin. This custom is clearly attested for Jerusalem in the Book of the Acts<sup>2</sup>; it seems also to have existed in Rome.<sup>3</sup> Accustomed to these ethnic groupings, Judeans and Hellenists remained on friendly terms. But it is also easy to understand how dangerous these national distinctions were within the Christian community whose unity they threatened. Very soon St. Paul would have to remind Christians that there is no longer amongst them "Greek nor Jew . . . nor Barbarian nor Scythian, nor slave nor free, but Christ all in all" (*Coloss.*, iii, 11, *Galat.*, iii, 26). From the first this was clear, and this affirmation of the Christian conscience triumphed over nationalist and provincial separatism.

### *The Deacons*

But it was necessary to take from the Hellenists all grounds of complaints. The Apostles could not devote all their time to ministering at tables, to the detriment of their essential duties, prayer and preaching (vi, 2-4). They saw to the matter by having seven deacons chosen by the Christian community. Those chosen all bore Greek names. The majority and perhaps all belonged to the Hellenist group<sup>4</sup>; we notice amongst them a "proselyte of Antioch, Nicholas." This election of a circumcised pagan shows that already at this date the Church numbered amongst her members men born

<sup>2</sup> vi, 9; synagogues of the freedmen, the Cyrenæans, the Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia and Asia. Cf. Schuerer, *op. cit.*, II, p. 87.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Frey, *Les communautés juives à Rome*, in *Recherches de science religieuse*, 1930, especially pp. 289 *et seq.*

<sup>4</sup> This origin is seen in the history of St. Stephen and St. Philip: their names would not indeed be in themselves a certain proof, for many Hebrews bore Greek names. A western reading found in the *Codex Bezae* and above all in the *Floriacensis* seems to say that the Hebrews already had their deacons: "Facta est contentio Græcorum adversus Ebreos, eo quod in cotidiano ministerio viduae Græcorum a ministris Hebraeorum despicerentur" (*Flor.*, cf. Jacquier, *in hoc loco*). If this was the case, it would be still clearer why the seven chosen ones all belonged to the Hellenist group.



amongst the Gentiles, and that these could be selected for hierarchical functions.

The diaconate had nothing in common except the name with the ministry of the *hazan* in the Jewish synagogues. The seven were to be charged with the distribution of alms, but also with the ministry of preaching. The importance of their office is already shown by the ordination they received; after their election by the people, the deacons were presented to the Apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.<sup>5</sup>

This ordination was to give a new impulse to the preaching of the Gospel; the Hellenists had already been converted in fairly large numbers (the complaints of their widows show this), but though there were many believers amongst them, hitherto they had had no preacher, no leader; henceforth those they had chosen were charged with an important mission and with a great responsibility. Two of them above all, Stephen and Philip, were in the front rank. Their authority of course remained subordinate to that of the Apostles; they were not like them witnesses to Jesus, chosen personally by Him; they were not heads of the Church. But they were the preachers of the Gospel; they devoted to this ministry admirable natural gifts, supplemented by miraculous charisms.

Immediately after the account of this election and ordination of the seven, St. Luke continues:

"And the word of the Lord increased, and the number of the disciples was multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly: a great multitude also of the priests obeyed the faith. And Stephen, full of grace and fortitude, did great wonders and signs among the people" (vi, 7-8).

### St. Stephen

These few words show the fruits of the new preaching. A Hellenist, and possibly of Alexandrian origin,<sup>6</sup> Stephen could approach his fellow citizens more easily than could the Hebrews. He met with a violent fanaticism on the part of some of them—his martyrdom shows this—but in others he found more independence towards the

<sup>5</sup> vi, 6. On this ordination, and on the character of the diaconate of the seven, cf. Coppens, *L'imposition des mains*, pp. 120-3.

<sup>6</sup> This supposition is rather a weak one; endeavours have been made to support it by comparisons between the discourse of Stephen and Philonian exegesis, and also by the mention of "wisdom," which is found four times in the narrative and discourse: vi, 3, 10; vii, 10, 22 (Jacquier, *op. cit.*, p. 104).

rabbinical traditions than was commonly found in Palestine. He himself developed his preaching more boldly than the Apostles had hitherto done. The discourses of St. Peter in the cenacle and in the Temple aimed at showing that Jesus had been raised by God from the dead, and that He had been made both Lord and Christ; they left in obscurity many themes of the evangelical preaching which were to be brought out little by little as hearers were able to bear them: the Temple would be destroyed; the Law, which the patriarchs had not known, was only a temporary dispensation which would have to give place to the Gospel.

All this began to appear in the preaching of St. Stephen, and met at once with a passionate opposition. At first it was merely a controversy which broke out amongst the Hellenists at Jerusalem; they tried to argue with Stephen, but "they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit that spoke." Then they suborned witnesses: "This man," they said, "has blasphemed Moses and God." The people were aroused, and the elders and scribes.

Until then the favour of the populace had protected the Apostles (v, 26); now public sentiment changed; people were roused as they had been against Jesus at His Passion. The scribes joined forces with the chief priests; all Judaism made a common front. Stephen's enemies took him before the Sanhedrin, and produced against him false witnesses: "This man ceaseth not to speak words against the holy place, and the Law. For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the traditions which Moses delivered unto us."

This was a new accusation; even if we separate it from the calumnies added by the false witnesses, that Stephen had blasphemed against the Temple and the Law, it remains not only that Jesus is the expected Messiah—as St. Peter had already preached—but also that this Messiah would substitute a new order of things for that which Moses had established. This theme appears more clearly in the great speech which St. Stephen made in his own defence.

### *St. Stephen's Discourse*

This speech is one of the most valuable documents of early Christian literature.<sup>7</sup> It is less a plea than an instruction, and

<sup>7</sup> The authenticity of this speech has often been attacked, e.g., by Weiszaecker, *op. cit.*, pp. 55 *et seq.*; and often defended, e.g. by Jacquier, *op. cit.*, p. 201; Wikenhauser, *op. cit.*, p. 149; Schumacher, *Der Diakon Stephanus*, p. 101.

thereby St. Stephen appears as the first "martyr" or witness; the constant preoccupation of Christians taken before judges will be less to save themselves than to expound and defend their faith. That was the great aim of Stephen. He sacrificed his life for his Master; he did not seek to rescue it from his accusers; but since he was able to make himself heard by the great Council of his nation, he wished to defend Christ there, as he had so often done before his Hellenist opponents. Careless of his own fate, he set forth once more the demonstration so familiar to him, of the divine plan which had prepared the ways of the Messiah with wisdom and power, and the infidelity of the Jews who had revolted against God and repulsed his envoys.

First he gives the history of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph (vii, 2-19); St. Paul will also delight to find his starting point before Moses in the patriarchs;<sup>8</sup> Christ had done the same.<sup>9</sup> Then we have the story of Moses; God wanted to make him the saviour of his people, but the Jews refused him (vii, 35). It was Moses who said to the children of Israel: "A prophet shall God raise up to you of your own brethren, him shall you hear as myself."<sup>10</sup> This Moses, who conversed on Sinai with the Angel of the Lord, and received the words of life in order to give them to you, was not obeyed by our fathers; they turned back towards Egypt, and adored the golden calf. God punished them by giving them up to the worship of the host of heaven (vii, 42). Then, in the last portion, Stephen comes to the Temple, which he was accused of blaspheming (vii, 44-50): in the desert, and afterwards in the Holy Land until the time of Solomon, our fathers had the Ark of the Covenant; Solomon built God a temple; but the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands: he said so by his prophet (*Isaias* lxvi, 1-2).

This long speech, brimful of accusations, ends in a terrible conclusion:

"You stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do you also. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? And they have slain them who foretold of the coming of the Just One; of whom you have been

<sup>8</sup> In particular, in the Epistle to the Galatians, especially ch. iii.

<sup>9</sup> He went even beyond the patriarchs to the origin of the human race to establish that the concession of divorce by Moses was neither primitive nor definitive; *Matt.* xix, 3-6.

<sup>10</sup> This text of *Deut.* xviii, 15, was already classic in Christian apologetics; we find it in a discourse of St. Peter (iii, 22).

now the betrayers and murderers; who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it."

Stephen's speech, the bearing of which has often been exaggerated and sometimes even entirely misrepresented,<sup>11</sup> is certainly very different from the discourses of St. Peter which we have described above. These differences are a confirmation of its authenticity, but they immediately present a problem: to what extent does the preaching of St. Stephen represent Christian preaching as a whole? It is difficult to give a precise and certain reply to this question. We must certainly reject the oft-made attempts to set up chair against chair in the Church and make Stephen a sectary<sup>12</sup>; but we might allow that the Holy Spirit made use of Stephen to direct the Christian Church towards a greater independence in regard to Judaism, its rites and its laws.

The final peroration of Stephen angered the Jews, especially the last accusation, the gravest of all of them, of disobedience to the Law. They trembled with rage and gnashed their teeth. And before this exasperated audience, Stephen suddenly affirmed that he saw the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God. Immediately there was an uproar: he was dragged out and stoned, while Saul took care of the garments of the witnesses. Stephen cried: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" and then "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge!" This martyrdom, the first in the history of the Church, was the faithful echo of the Passion of Christ, and in it we hear this prayer which at the supreme moment goes up to

<sup>11</sup> The bearing of the discourse of St. Stephen has often been misrepresented, as for instance in the otherwise not unworthy book by W. L. Knox, *St. Paul and the Church of Jerusalem*, Cambridge, 1925, p. 54, n. 24: "The whole implication of St. Stephen's speech is that the historical development of Judaism has been entirely false. This view is, of course, contrary to St. Paul's belief in the Law as the necessary preliminary to the Gospel; the attitude of St. Stephen in primitive Christian literature can only be paralleled in the Epistle of Barnabas. . . . The whole method involves, of course, a completely arbitrary selection of certain passages in the Old Testament, and a radically false interpretation of them; it can only be made logical and consistent by the Marcionite doctrine that the God of the Old Testament is a different being from the God of the New Testament." There is a great difference between Barnabas and Stephen: for Barnabas, all Judaism has gone astray; a material interpretation has been given to what God intended to be taken symbolically. Stephen does not go so far as that: his strongest statements concerning the Temple do not go beyond what Solomon himself said when the Temple was dedicated: "If heaven, and the heavens of heavens cannot contain thee, how much less this house which I have built?" (*I Kings* viii, 27; cf. *II Paralipom.* vi, 18). Cf. Jacquier, *op. cit.*, p. 231.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *infra*, p. 188.

the Lord Jesus, just as that of Jesus had gone up to His Father.<sup>13</sup>

The question has been asked how it was that the Jews, who did not possess the right of life and death, and who had not dared to take upon themselves the responsibility for the death of Jesus, were so bold on this occasion. Certain historians have thought to explain everything by a popular rising. That is an inadequate explanation. The Sanhedrin certainly displayed at this time more independent initiative than in other circumstances: this is shown again by the sending of Saul to Damascus. It is likely that the Jews had profited by the recall of Pilate and the vacancy in the Roman magistracy, and this would enable us to put these events as most probably belonging to the year 36. The period of relative peace which marked the beginnings of the Church would then have lasted six years.<sup>14</sup>

The persecution which broke out at this time, and of which Stephen was the first victim, continued more or less violently until the death of Agrippa (A.D. 44). It affected above all the Hellenists but it threatened also the Apostles. Incidentally, it contributed to the development of the Church; the hostility of the Jews detached the Christians from the Law, and led them to a clearer consciousness of their independence with regard to Judaism; the forced dispersion of the faithful, and above all of the Hellenists, spread the good news everywhere; and lastly, it was the persecution that turned Saul into St. Paul.

### *Conversion of St. Paul*

It is in the account of the martyrdom of St. Stephen that St. Paul appears for the first time in the history of the Church. A "young man named Saul" (vii, 58) consented to Stephen's death, and took part in it by guarding the clothing of the witnesses who stoned him (xxi, 20). Saul was in fact a bitter enemy of the Christians. By birth he belonged to the Hellenistic group; he was born at Tarsus (ix, 11; xxi, 30; xxi, 3; cf. ix, 30; xi, 25), and he had inherited from his family the freedom of the city of Tarsus (xxi, 39), as well as the rights of a Roman citizen (xvi, 37; xxii, 25, *et. seq.*, xxv, 10). But he had also received from them a still more precious

<sup>13</sup> The belief implied by this prayer helps us to interpret the speech itself, and completes its Christology, which was deliberately elementary. Cf. *History of the Doctrine of the Trinity*, Vol. I, pp. 263-4.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. *infra*, p. 185 n. 24.

heritage: he was "of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews" (*Philippians* iii, 5). In this family, established on Greek territory but faithful to the Jewish and Pharisaic traditions, "Saul, also called Paul" (xiii, 9) had learnt from infancy both Greek and Aramaic. It was in the Aramaic tongue that Jesus spoke to him on the road to Damascus (xxvi, 14), it was in Aramaic that he himself harangued the people of Jerusalem on the day of his arrest (xxi, 40). Aramaic was to him the religious and national language, but Greek was the language of daily use, and Greek was to be the language of his apostolate.

His Jewish formation, begun at Tarsus, was continued at Jerusalem; Saul received it "at the feet of Gamaliel" (xxii, 3). There he was "taught according to the truth of the law of the fathers, zealous for the law, as also all you are this day" (*ibid.*); "according to the law, a Pharisee; according to zeal, persecuting the Church of God; according to the justice that is in the Law, conversing without blame" (*Philipp.* iii, 5-6). In the Hellenist groups at Jerusalem so disturbed by the preaching of Stephen, he stood out by the violence of his anger: "You have heard," he said later on to the Galatians (i, 13-14), "of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion: how that, beyond measure, I persecuted the Church of God, and wasted it, and I made progress in the Jews' religion above many of my equals in my own nation, being more abundantly zealous for the traditions of my fathers." To the Jews of Jerusalem he could recall the same memories with more precision: "I persecuted this way unto death, bending and delivering into prisons both men and women, as the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the ancients" (xxii, 4-5).

The martyrdom of Stephen was not enough for him; he asked and obtained a mission to Damascus: "also receiving letters to the brethren, I went to Damascus, that I might bring them bound from thence to Jerusalem to be punished" (xxii, 5).

It was there that God awaited him. People have wondered what might have prepared the conversion of St. Paul. Mgr. Le Camus wrote: <sup>15</sup> "Paul regarded Stephen as the adversary of the law and the enemy of his people. His hatred went so far as to desire his death. But in vain did he harden himself against the triumphant truth; in spite of himself, and unknown to himself, the living and altogether new words of the holy deacon penetrated within him.

<sup>15</sup> *L'œuvre des apôtres*, Vol. I, p. 113.

Like a ruthless goad, it was to work upon him until the time when he was to fall vanquished and to declare himself the convert and determined representative of the ideas and the faith of the One he had anathematised." But all this is a fragile hypothesis. The same author writes with more justice<sup>16</sup>: "The apostle himself, so careful to study himself and to make himself known in the various phases of his religious life, sees no other cause for his conversion than the heavenly manifestation by which he was thrown down. But if he has never said anything of that inner working which would have prepared for his sudden adhesion to Christianity, it is because in his recollections he found nothing."

What we can say of his past is that his good faith partly excused his rancour. What he did, he did "in ignorance"; moreover, his tenacious attachment to the Law was a more favourable disposition for Christianity than would have been the indifference of the Sadducees. We see from other texts how seriously he regarded the obligation of the Law: "I testify again to every man circumcising himself that he is a debtor to do the whole Law" (*Galat.* v, 3), and how this crushing obligation was a torment to his upright and sincere soul.<sup>17</sup> From this torment Christ was to deliver him; he would feel first of all the pain of being torn away from his past, but speedily, and sooner than any others, he would understand the value of this deliverance.

This event, which was to have such a decisive importance for the history of the Church, is narrated three times in the Book of Acts,<sup>18</sup> and recalled by St. Paul himself in his epistles.<sup>19</sup> As he approached Damascus, a great light shone round about him; he fell to the ground, and he heard a voice which said to him in the Hebrew language: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"

"Who art thou, Lord?"—"I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. Arise, go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do."

<sup>16</sup> *Op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 177.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. *Rom.* vii.

<sup>18</sup> The first of these accounts is written by St. Luke (ix, 3-8); the two others are given in the discourses of St. Paul to the Jews of Jerusalem after his arrest (xxii, 6-11), and to King Agrippa (xxvi, 12-16). These three narratives are given together in a comparative table by M. Tricot, *Saint Paul*, pp. 46-7. These differ only by insignificant details. Cf. Tricot, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

<sup>19</sup> The most explicit mention is in *I Cor.* xv, 7-8: "... After that, he was seen by James, then by all the apostles, and last of all, he was seen also by me, as by one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God."

In the course of the thirty years of his life as a Christian, St. Paul will hear words from the Lord many times and he will have many visions. But none of these graces will be comparable to this appearance of Jesus on the way to Damascus. He had seen the Lord<sup>20</sup>; it was because of this that he was an Apostle, a witness of the Resurrection of Christ, like the other Apostles.<sup>21</sup> And Jesus, who appeared to him, revealed His Gospel to him,<sup>22</sup> and gave to him the apostolate of the Gentiles.<sup>23</sup>

### *Baptism and First Preaching of St. Paul*

Blinded, Paul was led into Damascus, and there healed and baptised by Ananias: "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus hath sent me, he that appeared to thee in the way as thou camest, that thou mayest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost." As soon as he had received baptism the Apostle began his work, "preaching Jesus in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. And all that heard him, were astonished, and said: 'Is not this he who persecuted in Jerusalem those that called upon this name; and came hither for that intent, that he might carry them bound to the chief priests?'" (ix, 20-21). The Acts continue: "But Saul increased much more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, affirming that this is the Christ. And when many days were passed, the Jews consulted together to kill him. . . ." (22-23), and Paul had to evade them.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>20</sup> I Cor. ix, 1: "Am I not an apostle? Have not I seen Christ Jesus our Lord?"

<sup>21</sup> I Cor. xv, 8: In this appearance, Jesus was seen only by Saul; the others "heard indeed a voice, but saw no man" (Acts ix, 7). This appearance of Jesus to Paul is also attested by Ananias (ix, 17; xxii, 14), and by Jesus Himself (xxvi, 16). Cf. Wikenhauser, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

<sup>22</sup> Gal. i, 11-12: "I give you to understand, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For neither did I receive it of man, nor did I learn it but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."

<sup>23</sup> Acts xxvi, 15-18: "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise up, and stand upon thy feet, for to this end have I appeared to thee, that I may make thee a minister, and a witness of those things which thou hast seen and of those things wherein I will appear to thee, delivering thee from the people and from the nations, unto which now I send thee, to open their eyes, that they may be converted from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and a lot among the saints." In this speech made by Paul to King Agrippa, the instructions which Ananias had given him (xxii, 14) are attributed directly to the Lord Jesus; this is merely the suppression of an intermediary, in whom Agrippa would not be interested.

<sup>24</sup> II Cor. xi, 32; cf. Acts ix, 23-5, Gal. i, 17. When Paul had to leave Damascus



Between these two series of events which Luke connects, suppressing, as he often does, all that happened in between, we must insert a long stay in Arabia, mentioned in the Epistle to the Galatians.<sup>25</sup> We have no further information concerning this journey and stay. Many think that Paul wished to spend some time in retreat before beginning a life so different from that which he had hitherto led; Lightfoot and Cornely think that he withdrew to Sinai; Lagrange, on the contrary, thinks that "the revelations granted to Paul were always mingled with his active life as their immediate principle"<sup>26</sup> and that if he went to Arabia it was to preach there. This conjecture is a likely one, but it must be added that this preaching, if it took place, had little echo and perhaps small success;<sup>27</sup> the Christians of Jerusalem had not heard of it.

### *St. Paul in Jerusalem*

After his second stay at Damascus and his escape, he arrived in the holy city; he essayed to join himself to the disciples, "but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple" (ix, 26).

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the city was under the rule of Aretas. Aretas, King of the Arabians, was at war with Antipas, who had dismissed his sister. Antipas had been upheld by Tiberius, who ordered Vitellius, governor of Syria, to proceed against the King of the Arabians; this expedition was stopped by the death of Tiberius (March 16th, 37). At Damascus there have been found coins of Tiberius dated 33-34. Aretas was accordingly not the master of Damascus at this date, nor probably until the death of Tiberius; he must have been invested by Caius, who ascended the throne on March 18th, 37, and who in this matter, as in all others, took an opposite course to that of Tiberius. The escape of Paul therefore could not have been anterior to 37, nor his conversion, three years before the journey to Jerusalem (*Gal.* i, 18), before 34. We may date the conversion in the year 36; the first stay at Damascus, the journey to Arabia, and the second stay at Damascus from 36 to 38; the escape from Damascus, the first journey to Jerusalem, in 38-39. In this hypothesis there will be only fourteen years from the conversion of St. Paul to the Council of Jerusalem; the three years (*Gal.* i, 18) will not be added to the fourteen (*Gal.* ii, 1), but the two periods will begin from the same point, i.e. from his conversion. Cf. Prat, *Recherches de science religieuse*, 1912, pp. 372-92; art. *Chronologie*, in *Supplément to the Dict. de la Bible*, 1283-4.

<sup>25</sup> *Gal.* i, 15-19: "When it pleased him, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles, immediately I condescended not to flesh and blood, neither went I to Jerusalem to the apostles who were before me; but I went into Arabia, and again I returned to Damascus. Then, after three years, I went to Jerusalem to see Peter, and I tarried with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles I saw none, saving James the brother of the Lord." On the silence of the Acts, cf. Wikenhauser, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

<sup>26</sup> *Épître aux Galates*, p. 17 (on i, 17).

<sup>27</sup> This is the opinion of St. Jerome.

Then Barnabas became his surety;<sup>28</sup> he “took him and brought him to the Apostles, and told them how he had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had dealt confidently in the name of Jesus.” Thus suspicions were dissipated; Paul was able to see Peter, as he had desired, and to discuss matters for fifteen days with him; he also saw James the brother of the Lord. From that time he shared in Jerusalem the life of the disciples, speaking with full assurance in the name of Christ.

It was doubtless during this first stay at Jerusalem that Paul had in the Temple the vision which he narrated later on to the Jews (xxii, 17 *et seq.*):

“When I was come again to Jerusalem, and was praying in the Temple, I was in a trance, and saw him saying unto me: ‘Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem, because they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.’ And I said, ‘Lord, they know that I cast into prison and beat in every synagogue them that believed in thee. And when the blood of Stephen thy witness was shed I stood by and consented, and kept the garments of them that killed him.’ And he said to me, ‘Go, for unto the Gentiles afar off will I send thee.’”

This notification by Divine Providence was shortly afterwards realised in effect: Paul argued with the Hellenists; very soon he was, like Stephen, threatened with death. “Which when the brethren had known, they brought him down to Cæsarea, and sent him away to Tarsus.” He remained in Cilicia until Barnabas sought him there to take him to Antioch (in 42 or 43).

### *Philip the Deacon*

The conversion of St. Paul, closely connected with the death of St. Stephen, has led us to omit the events which had immediately followed that death.

“At that time there was raised a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all dispersed through the countries of Judea and Samaria, except the Apostles. And devout men took order for Stephen’s funeral, and made great mourning over him. But Saul made havock of the church, entering in from house to house, and dragging away men and women, committed them to prison” (vii, 1-3).

<sup>28</sup> Barnabas was of great repute in the Christian community. He was a Levite, a Cypriot by origin; he possessed a field, sold it, and laid the price at the feet of the Apostles (iv, 36-7). Barnabas was a Hellenist, and may have known Paul before his conversion.

These verses are of interest in more than one way: the Apostles remained at Jerusalem, while all the rest were scattered. Protestant historians see in this a new proof of the opposition which they think they find between the Hellenists, who had fallen out with official Judaism, and the Apostles, who respected it.<sup>29</sup> Without going so far as that, Le Camus writes: "The Apostles seem to have been less affected by it, either because they felt they had the protection of the people, or else because being apparently more visibly attached to Mosaism than Stephen and his followers, they were not directly aimed at by the persecution. They remained peaceably at Jerusalem, while the Hellenists . . . left the holy city *en masse*."<sup>30</sup> It certainly seems that the two groups were not equally menaced; we see this again on Paul's return to Jerusalem. Nevertheless, we cannot speak of a "peaceable stay"; the Apostles themselves were obliged to scatter and to hide themselves; Paul returning from Damascus could see only Peter and James; less directly concerned than the Hellenists, they were nevertheless suspect, and could no longer pursue their free action of the first years.

Reuss writes as follows on the subject of the burial of Stephen:<sup>31</sup> "We must above all stress what is said here of the last honours rendered to Stephen. This man, the victim of religious fanaticism, and put to death as a criminal, found friends who dared to mourn him publicly. These courageous friends were not the Apostles, they were . . . converts from paganism, uncircumcised proselytes. . . . All this shows us that we have here the symptoms of a first transformation of the Church, a transformation which, like all the similar phases of its history, is at once a progress and an occasion of schism. The Apostles remain at Jerusalem, in the shadow of the Temple; the persecuted Hellenists go to carry the word of God to the Samaritans and the pagans. Providence carried on its work by confiding it to other hands." This account disfigures the facts, and the historian is projecting back into the primitive church the shadow of the schisms which were to lacerate it later on. In reality there was no trace of schism at all: the conversion of the Samaritans, begun by a Hellenist, was concluded by two Apostles; and if Philip introduced into the Church a proselyte, the Ethiopian

<sup>29</sup> Reuss, *op. cit.*, p. 102; Monnier, *La notion de l'apostolat*, pp. 168 et seq.

<sup>30</sup> Le Camus, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

<sup>31</sup> Reuss, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

eunuch, it was Peter who was to give admission to the first pagan, Cornelius.

The persecution, by scattering the Hellenists, helped to propagate Christianity. Philip, who was, it seems, of Cæsarea, went to Samaria, "and the people with one accord were attentive to those things which were said by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did." <sup>32</sup>

This rousing of the city recalls the excitement caused at Sichem by the first preaching of Jesus. Many were baptised, and amongst them a certain Simon Magus. The Apostles, learning of the success of this evangelisation, sent Peter and John, who laid hands on the newly baptised and gave them the Holy Spirit. <sup>33</sup>

Simon Magus, seeing the wonderful effects produced by the laying on of hands by the Apostles, offered them money if they would give him the same power. Peter repelled him with indignation, and Simon seems to have been inclined to repent: "Pray you for me to the Lord, that none of these things which you have spoken may come upon me" (viii, 24). The New Testament says nothing further of Simon; later literature attributes to him a great role, it makes him the god of the Samaritans, and later on, the constant opponent of Peter. <sup>34</sup>

At an angel's orders, Philip went to the Gaza road; there he met a eunuch, a servant of Candace, Queen of the Ethiopians; he joined his chariot, offered to explain to him the passage of Isaias which

<sup>32</sup> viii, 6. The text of viii, 5, is not certain: we may read either "the town of Samaria" or "a town of Samaria." If it is Samaria or Sebaste which is referred to, this was then a town more Hellenist than Jewish or Samaritan: Pompey had rebuilt it, and had made it a free city (*Antiquities of the Jews*, XIV, 4, 4; *Wars of the Jews*, I, 7, 7; Gabinius had restored it and fortified it (*Antiquities of the Jews*, XIV, 5, 3; *Wars of the Jews*, I, 8, 4); Herod had embellished it and named it Sebaste; it was there he had had his wife Marianne and her sons put to death; during the Jewish War, Sebaste passed to the Romans (*Antiquities of the Jews*, XVII, 10, 3, 9; *Wars of the Jews*, II, 3, 4; 4, 3; 2, 5).

<sup>33</sup> Reuss writes (*op. cit.*, p. 105): "It is not that these gave a teaching superior to that of Philip, or that their pre-eminent dignity had greater claim on the grace of God (although this latter explanation is not excluded by the text), but their presence was able to provoke a more intense movement, more energetic transports, and consequently, psychical phenomena analogous to those which had already been noticed elsewhere." This interpretation only too well betrays a disbelief in any sacramental grace conferred by the Apostles; the text says nothing of these intense transports, it affirms only the action of the Apostles, and the results which it produced.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Bk. II, ch. vi, § 3.

he was reading, preached Jesus to him, and baptised him (viii, 26-40). This new triumph was, like the evangelisation of Samaria, an act of expansion and liberation, but a still bolder one.<sup>35</sup> After baptising the eunuch, Philip was taken away from him to Azotus; thence he went to Cæsarea, evangelising all the cities *en route*.

### § 3. MISSIONS OF ST. PETER

#### *The Evangelisation of the Sharon*

Just as Peter and John had gone through Samaria after Philip, Peter now decided to visit Sharon, which Philip had just evangelised. The Church was then enjoying peace, but it was a temporary calm rather than a permanent state. At Lydda Peter stayed with "the saints"; there he found a paralytic. "Eneas," he said, "the Lord Jesus Christ healeth thee: arise and make thy bed." Eneas was cured; Lydda and Sharon were converted by this miracle.

The presence of Peter became known at Joppa; he was asked to go to the house of a pious lady named Tabitha, who had just died. When he was taken into the upper chamber where the body lay all ready for burial, he found there widows who wept and showed him the garments which the charitable Tabitha had woven for them. Peter knelt and prayed, and then turning to the body, said: "Tabitha, arise!" She opened her eyes, saw Peter, and sat up. Many people were converted at Joppa in consequence of this miracle.

In this evangelising expedition, Peter had in the first place gone to the Jewish cities, Lydda and Joppa. He had not gone to the pagan city of Cæsarea, but God was to summon him there.

#### *The Conversion of Cornelius*

The conversion of the centurion Cornelius is narrated in full detail; it was in fact an event of capital importance in the history of the development of Christianity.

<sup>35</sup> The eunuchs were excluded from the community of Israel (*Deut.* xxiii, 1); the *Book of Wisdom* (iii, 14) was less severe in their regard. Was the eunuch a Jew? St. Irenæus thought so, and his opinion is regarded as certain, or at least as probable, by a good number of commentators and historians such as Tillemont, *Mémoires*, Vol. II, p. 67; Foakes-Jackson, *The Acts*, London, 1931, p. 76; Boudou, *Actes*, p. 174. But his attitude, his understanding of Isaïas, his desire for instruction, should lead us to regard him rather as a proselyte, not belonging to the Jewish community, but fearing God and adoring Him.

In the *cohors italica* which held the garrison at Cæsarea<sup>1</sup> there was a centurion, Cornelius by name, "a religious man, and fearing God"<sup>2</sup> together with all his household. About the ninth hour of the day, an angel appeared to him and commanded him to send to Joppa for a certain Simon surnamed Peter, who was lodging with Simon the tanner, near the sea. Cornelius called to him one of his soldiers, inclined like himself towards the religion of Israel, told him of the vision, and despatched him to Joppa together with two servants.

On the morrow, about midday, as these men were approaching Joppa, Peter went up to the roof of the house to pray. He fell into an ecstasy: he saw the heavens opened, and there came down from thence something like a great sheet held at its four corners and hanging from heaven to earth. In it were to be seen all the four-footed beasts and creeping things of the earth, and all the birds of the air. At the same time a voice was heard: "Arise, Peter, kill and eat." "Far be it from me, Lord," replied Peter, "I never did eat anything that is common or unclean." "That which God hath cleansed, do not thou call common." Three times the same vision appeared, with the same invitation, and the same replies. And while Peter was asking himself what all this might signify, the men from Cæsarea arrived, and the Spirit commanded Peter to follow them.

The next day they set out together for Cæsarea. A few of the faithful from Joppa accompanied Peter: in so delicate a situation, the Apostles wanted to make sure of their witness. When they arrived on the day following at Cæsarea, they found Cornelius surrounded by his relatives and friends. Cornelius came forward towards Peter, and knelt before him. Peter lifted him up: "Arise, I myself also am a man." He entered into the house, and said to all those there present: "You know that it is forbidden to a Jew to have relations with a stranger, or to enter into his house;<sup>3</sup> but as for myself, God has instructed me to regard no man as common

<sup>1</sup> There was no legion in Judea, which was a Procuratorial province, but there were cohorts. The presence of a *cohors italica* is mentioned in 69; it could have been there already about the year 40 (Ramsay, *Was Christ born at Bethlehem?*, pp. 260-9, and Jacquier, *op. cit.*, p. 312).

<sup>2</sup> These expressions are those by which Luke designates uncircumcised proselytes. Cf. Ramsay, *St. Paul*, p. 43.

<sup>3</sup> The Jews could enter into a pagan house without scruple, but not to eat or receive hospitality there. Cf. Jacquier, *op. cit.*, p. 324.

or unclean; that is why I have had no objection to coming here as you requested. Tell me, therefore, for what cause you have sent for me?"

Cornelius then related his vision. Peter, hearing this, praised the universality of God's mercy: "In very deed I perceive that God is not a respecter of persons, but in every nation, he that feareth him and worketh justice is acceptable to him." He then went on to preach the Gospel of peace which God had sent to the children of Israel by Jesus Christ, who is the "Lord of all" (x, 36). The life of Jesus was apparently already known to Cornelius: "You know the word which hath been published through all Judea. . . ." Peter recalled the death of Jesus, and stressed His resurrection. This was witnessed not by the whole people, but by witnesses whom God had chosen, "we who did eat and drink with him after he rose again from the dead"; God has made Him judge of the living and the dead; whosoever believes in Him receives through His name the pardon of sins.

"While Peter was yet speaking these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word." The Jews who had accompanied Peter were astonished, hearing these pagans speaking in tongues. Peter immediately went on: "Can we refuse the water of baptism to those who have received the Holy Ghost as well as us?" And he had them baptised in the name of the Lord. Then they prayed him to stay for a few days.

This decisive step, narrated with such detail, reveals to us what obstacles existed to the preaching of the Gospel, and how they were removed. The distinction between pure and impure foods may appear to us now to be unimportant; it was not at all such for the Jews. Every faithful Jew was ready to say again like the seven martyred brethren: "We are ready to die rather than to transgress the laws of God, received from our fathers" (*II Mach.* vii, 2). It might be urged that Christ had revoked these Jewish laws: "There is nothing from without a man that entering into him can defile him, but the things which come from a man, those are they that defile a man."<sup>4</sup> But this bold word had even then alarmed the disciples, and they hesitated to put it into practice. Here it was above all necessary that the Holy Spirit should remind the Apostles of what Jesus had said to them, and help them to understand it.

The social laws made them hesitate even more than the food laws:

<sup>4</sup> *Mark* vii, 14. Cf. *supra*, p. 105.

were they obliged to admit pagans into the Church, and not only circumcised pagans like Nicholas the proselyte of Antioch, but religious men and those fearing God who had not received circumcision? The Holy Spirit himself decided the matter by pouring forth upon Cornelius and his household the gifts of Pentecost, and Peter, the head of the Church, allowed himself to be led patiently and with docility into this new way by the Spirit, not anticipating its action but not resisting it, though all his moral and religious formation was alarmed.

### *Peter in Jerusalem*

This alarm is made more evident by the reaction of the Christians at Jerusalem. When they learnt of the happenings at Cæsarea, they were astounded. As soon as Peter arrived, they took him aside, and said to him: "Thou didst go in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them!" (xi, 3).

Peter had brought with him the six men who had accompanied him from Joppa. In their presence he gave to the faithful an account of all that had taken place: the vision at Joppa, the command from heaven, the visit to Cornelius, and, above all, the descent of the Holy Ghost while he was yet speaking:

"When I had begun to speak, the Holy Ghost fell upon them, as upon us also in the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how that he said: 'John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.' If, then, God gave them the same grace, as to us also who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ; who was I, that could withstand God? Having heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying: God then hath also to the Gentiles given repentance unto life" (xi, 15-18).

As we see, the basis of the discussion had been altered and widened. At first complaint was made that Peter had gone amongst pagans; at the end, he had won not only on this point, but also on the much more serious question of the baptism of a pagan. Several historians hesitate to accept this account literally: the resistance which we find later on this question of the baptism of the uncircumcised seems to them to be irreconcilable with an agreement arrived at in this way on the occasion of the baptism of Cornelius. They think that the Apostles alone were convinced, and that the



mass of the faithful still resisted, or else that the case of Cornelius was regarded, like that of the Ethiopian eunuch, as only an exceptional one, justified by a miraculous divine intervention.<sup>5</sup> We do not maintain that this particular decision sufficed to convince the whole community at Jerusalem; but there is no indication that the case was dealt with as an exceptional one, which was not to form a precedent. On this occasion, as in many another, we must not be surprised that several Divine messages were required to change habits of mind which were so deeply rooted and which appeared so sacred.

In Judean territory, and above all at Jerusalem, the case of the centurion Cornelius was to remain an exception for a long time, but already Christianity was spreading outside Judea, at Antioch. It was there that the evangelisation of the pagans was going to give the Apostles the joy of new and immense harvests, but also the anxiety of very serious problems.

#### § 4. ANTIOCH AND JERUSALEM

##### *The Evangelisation of Antioch*

The persecution which had expelled the Hellenist Christians from Jerusalem dispersed them as far as Phœnicia, the island of Cyprus, and the city of Antioch. They preached, but there were some of them who announced the Gospel only to the Jews. Others, on the contrary, Cypriots or Cyreneans, after their arrival at Antioch, preached also to the Greeks, "and the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believing, were converted to the Lord" (xi, 19-21). Here again God intervened, and by the very abundant blessings which He bestowed upon the Greek missionaries, showed the Church the path she was to tread.

The Church obeyed with joy: as soon as those at Jerusalem learned of the success of the mission at Antioch, they sent there

<sup>5</sup> Reuss writes (*op. cit.*, pp. 131-2): "The account ends with these words: 'They calmed down, and showed themselves convinced.' These words say far too much, if we bear in mind the rest of the history. We must greatly modify them. Either Luke has in mind here only the Twelve, the masses showing themselves always hostile to the admission of pagans, or else the agreement related only to this special case of the household of Cornelius, and there was no intention of making it a general rule." A similar interpretation will be found in Renan, *Les apôtres*, p. 166.

Barnabas, just as a little earlier Peter and John had been sent to Samaria to crown the work of Philip there. The Hellenic mission at Antioch had been inaugurated by Cypriots and Cyreneans, and perhaps for this reason another Cypriot, Barnabas, was chosen to direct it. The Church at Jerusalem was aware of his disinterestedness and his zeal, and it set before him a magnificent field for his apostolic labours.

Barnabas was, in fact, "a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith" (xi, 24). When he arrived at Antioch and had seen the grace of God, he rejoiced. In order to gather in such an abundant harvest, he decided to appeal to the powerful preacher whom he had a little previously introduced to the Apostles at Jerusalem; he therefore went to Tarsus to seek Paul. He found him there, conducted him to Antioch, and for a whole year they worked there together, teaching a great multitude. It was at Antioch that the disciples were for the first time called Christians. This fact, recorded by St. Luke (*Acts* xi, 26) reveals the success of the Christian preaching. Henceforth the disciples of Jesus were no longer regarded as a Jewish sect similar to so many others; the pagans themselves distinguished the Christians from the Jews.

The strong position which Christianity won at Antioch naturally provided a better centre for the propagation of Christianity than Jerusalem. The missions mentioned up to the present, in Samaria and Sharon, were restricted to Palestine; Jerusalem provided a sufficient centre for them. But now the Greek and Roman world was being penetrated, and Antioch, the great eastern metropolis, was to be the starting point of this effort. It was from there that Saul and Barnabas would soon set forth for the conquest of Asia Minor, and thither they were to return after their mission as to their centre of action.

Thus during these years Antioch appears as the centre of the universal Church. Jerusalem had occupied this position until about the year 40; Rome will hold it later. This translation of the centre of Christian unity is marked in an ancient tradition by the setting up of the chair of St. Peter at Antioch.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tillemont writes on this subject (*Mémoires*, Vol. I, *Saint Pierre*, art. 27, pp. 159-60): "According to the Fathers, he (St. Peter) founded the Church at Antioch before going to Rome, and there lived, and it was quite fitting that the city which first received the name 'Christian' should also have had as its master and pastor the first apostle. Antioch was his first see, and he was its first bishop. . . . Nevertheless, it is not necessary to suppose that he remained there through-

The sojourns that Peter certainly made at Antioch confirm this tradition, without making it necessary to hold to a solemn translation of the chair of Peter, or to determine the time during which he was the Bishop of Antioch.<sup>2</sup>

### *Famine and Persecution in Jerusalem*

"In these days, there came prophets from Jerusalem to Antioch. And one of them named Agabus, rising up, signified by the Spirit that there should be a great famine over the whole world, which came to pass under Claudius. And the disciples, every man according to his ability, purposed to send relief to the brethren who dwelt in Judea. Which also they did, sending it to the ancients, by the hands of Barnabas and Saul" (xi, 27-30).

This incident, narrated thus in passing by St. Luke, is interesting for more than one reason: it shows us the office held in the primitive community by the prophets,<sup>3</sup> it also manifests to us the close bonds of charity which united the different churches to each other. From this date begin the collections for the poor of Jerusalem; they will not cease until the ruin of the holy city. Lastly, and above all, we see here for the first time the presbyters or ancients of the Christian church. This fact proves that St. Luke did not set

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out this period, as we see from what followed. Thus it seems that he was the bishop of Antioch only because he took a particular care of that church, and not because he always resided there. For it seems that no apostle, other than St. James at Jerusalem, was at first completely attached to a particular church." The feast of the chair of St. Peter at Antioch is of Gallican origin. Cf. Duchesne, *Origines du culte chrétien*, p. 296; Kirsch, *Der Stadtrömische Festkalender*, Münster, 1924, p. 18; Lietzmann, *Petrus und Paulus in Rom*, Berlin, 1927, p. 96. Tillemont adds in note 25: "Baronius thinks that St. Peter could have founded the church of Antioch and established his see there without going there, because all this signifies only that by his authority he erected it as a patriarchal see. But I do not know if many people would follow him in this."

<sup>2</sup> Fouard (*op. cit.*, p. 189) thinks that Peter went to Antioch in 40, before the vision at Joppa, and translated his see there; two years later on he transferred it to Rome. Belzer (*Die Apostelgeschichte*, 150, quoted by Jacquier, *op. cit.*, p. 357) distinguishes two successive evangelisations of Antioch: the first, begun about 33, was addressed only to the Jews; it ended in the establishing of a Judeo-Christian community, of which Peter was the head, from 34 or 35 until 39. About 39 or 40, when news came of the baptism of Cornelius, Hellenists came and preached to the Greeks. These hypotheses seem gratuitous; the suggestion of Tillemont seems better founded.

<sup>3</sup> The Christian prophets were above all preachers inspired by God: *I Cor.* xiv, 29-32; but they could also foretell the future, as Agabus did on this occasion and later on (xxi, 10).

out to give us an exact account of the origin of all ecclesiastical institutions; it reveals the development of the Christian church and its character. Already at this date the Church had constituted its hierarchy and its local organisation. This manifests its independence with regard to the synagogue; it is equally a sign of the hierarchical spirit, which was strong from the first.

It was also at this time that there broke out the persecution provoked by Agrippa. This prince was the son of Aristobulus and Berenice. His father, a son of Herod and Mariamne, was put to death by Herod in the year 7; brought up at the court of Tiberius, he had led there a disordered life. A few months before his death in 37, Tiberius had thrown him into prison; Caius, his companion in debauchery, set him free when he ascended the throne (A.D. 37), and gave him the tetrarchy of Philip, then that of Lysinias, with the title of king, and then in 40, after the deposition of Antipas, Galilee and Perea. In 41, Claudius added to these Samaria and Judea; the kingdom of Herod was thus reconstituted.

As soon as he arrived in Jerusalem, the king displayed a great zeal for the Law.<sup>4</sup> Taking the opposite course to that of Herod, his predecessor, he manifested a particular sympathy for the Jews and a great veneration towards the Law; "he loved to live continually at Jerusalem, and retained in their completeness the institutions of the forefathers. He kept himself in a continual state of purity, and never allowed a day to pass without offering the prescribed sacrifices."<sup>5</sup> The Mishna narrates that one day, when celebrating in the Temple the Feast of Tabernacles, he was reading the Book of Deuteronomy in accordance with the custom of sabbatic years.<sup>6</sup> When he arrived at the text: "Thou shalt not have to reign over thee a stranger who is not thy brother," he felt that this applied to himself, and burst into tears, but all the people then cried out: "Do not be dismayed! Thou art our brother; thou art our brother."<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, XIX, 6, 1, 293: "Arriving at Jerusalem, he immolated sacrifices in thanksgiving, without forgetting any prescription of the Law. For this reason he commanded that a great number of Nazarites should have their heads shorn. The golden chain which Caius had given him, and which weighed as much as the iron one which had been attached to his royal hands . . . was hung inside the sacred precincts . . ."

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, XIX, 7, 3, 328-31.

<sup>6</sup> The year 40-41 was a sabbatic year. Cf. Schuerer, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 555.

<sup>7</sup> M. Sota, vii, p. 8; Schuerer, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 555.

*Martyrdom of St. James the Great*

Anxious to gain the goodwill of the people by his religious zeal, Agrippa actively revived the persecution of the Christians. "He killed James, the brother of John, with the sword; <sup>8</sup> and seeing that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to take up Peter also" (xii, 2-3). It was the time of the Azymes; as on the occasion of the trial of Jesus, it was thought prudent to wait for the end of the feast of the Pasch. Peter was kept in prison, and surrounded by all possible precautions: a double chain, keepers at his sides, keepers at the door of the prison.

*The Deliverance of St. Peter*

During the night which preceded the day fixed for his trial, Peter was miraculously delivered. A great light shone in his cell; the Apostle was roused by an angel; his chains fell from his hands, he dressed and followed the angel, thinking it was a dream. He passed the guards, saw the great door open, and went out into the street. The angel then left him, and Peter, coming to himself, said: "Now I know in very deed, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews." He went to the house of Mary, the mother of John surnamed Mark, and knocked at the door. The servant, Rhoda, ran to open it. Recognising the voice of Peter, she was overcome with joy, forgot to open the door, but ran to announce that Peter was there. They said to her: "Thou art mad." She insisted that it was indeed he. Then they said to her: "It is his angel." Peter meanwhile continued to knock. They opened the door, and recognised him with astonishment. He told them how he had come out of the prison, and

<sup>8</sup> On this martyrdom, related in a word, Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, II, 9, 2-3, adds this fact, found by him in Clement of Alexandria (*Hypot.*, vii): "The one who had taken him before the tribunal, seeing the testimony which he had given, was moved thereby, and confessed that he also was a Christian. Both of them were led out to death. On the way, this man prayed James to forgive him. The Apostle reflected for a moment, and then said to him: 'Peace be with thee,' and embraced him. And so both were beheaded at the same time." A certain number of historians, following Wellhausen, *Evangelium Marci*, p. 90, and above all E. Schwartz, *Ueber Tod der Sohne Zebedaei*, 1904, have endeavoured to associate together the deaths of the two sons of Zebedee. This hypothesis of the early death of St. John has been thoroughly refuted, and in particular by L. de Grandmaison, *Jesus Christ*, Vol. I, pp. 147-55.

said to them: "Tell these things to James, and to the brethren." Then he left them and went into another place.

This account of St. Luke, so full of life, brings home to us all the emotion of this miraculous deliverance. It also reveals to us more than one feature of the life of the Christians in Jerusalem, of which we know so little. They were gathered together in a great number in the house of Mary, mother of Mark, and prayed for Peter (xii, 5-12); the evangelist of prayer has taken care to show us how the whole Church had obtained this miracle from the Lord. Mark appears here for the first time. He is still young, his cousin Barnabas will very soon take him on his apostolic mission; he will work first of all with St. Paul, then with Barnabas alone. Later on we shall find him again at Rome, near to St. Peter, whose interpreter he was, and near to St. Paul, of whom he was once more the companion and friend.<sup>9</sup> Amongst the numerous disciples gathered together in the house of Mary we see no Apostle, but St. Peter, before leaving, asks that the account of his deliverance should be communicated "to James and to the brethren." This is the first time that James, the brother of the Lord, appears as the head of the church of Jerusalem; he will occupy this office until his death. As for St. Peter himself, he left the holy city, and went "into another place." It is easy to understand that after this escape he could not remain in Jerusalem. It is certain that this departure was not a farewell for ever; he will be once more in Jerusalem at the time of the Council (xv, 7). Where did he go in the interval? We do not know for certain; Jacquier thinks it "probable" that he went to Antioch, "possible" that he went to Rome. His later sojourns in these two cities can be indeed affirmed as certain, but their dates are not certain.

The persecution which led to Peter's departure was soon to come to an end by the death of Agrippa. This painful and sudden death, which struck the king at a moment of great triumph in 44, shortly after the Pasch, seemed to be a punishment by Providence: "An angel of the Lord struck him, because he had not given the honour to God."<sup>10</sup> And Christianity continued to grow: "The word of the Lord increased and multiplied" (xii, 24).

<sup>9</sup> On all this, cf. Lagrange, *Saint Marc*, pp. xvi-xix; Huby, *Saint Marc*, pp. ix-xiv.

<sup>10</sup> xii, 23. The account in Josephus (*Antiquities of the Jews*, XIX, 8, 2, 343-50) is longer and less vigorous than that of St. Luke, but it confirms its

*Persecutions and Growth of the Church*

These last words of St. Luke sum up all this first period of the history of the Church. Fourteen years had elapsed since the death of Jesus; during this very short period of time the work had grown. It was no longer the grain of mustard seed, but already a great tree which covered the whole of Palestine and was extending its branches over Damascus, Cyprus, Antioch; everywhere this expansion was opposed; we can affirm in all truth what the Jews were to say fifteen years later to St. Paul in Rome: "This sect is everywhere contradicted"; and nevertheless everywhere the Church was taking root and growing. In Jerusalem, the stronghold of Judaism, Christianity had won many disciples, even among the priests (vi, 7); when Paul returned there in 58, James could say to him: "Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews have received the faith." Doubtless these thousands would never be more than a minority in Jerusalem, and an oppressed minority; we have told of the martyrdom of St. Stephen and that of St. James the Great; very soon there will be the captivity of St. Paul and the martyrdom of the Bishop of Jerusalem, St. James the Less, and then all through this period there will be the expulsion of the Hellenists, the imprisonment of St. Peter, the persecution, now gentle, now violent, which unceasingly threatens the Church. And in face of this opposition, which slackens sometimes, but never ceases completely, the Church continues to grow.

What happened during these fifteen years at Jerusalem is a forecast of the history of the propagation of Christianity through the missions of St. Paul: everywhere, after a first contact, and often numerous conversions, the Church encounters the insidious, obstinate and violent opposition of the Jews; everywhere there is verified the prophetic words of Jesus to Ananias: "I will show to Paul how great things he must suffer for my name's sake" (ix, 16). It is through these persecutions, and at the price of these sufferings, that the Church develops.

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essential features: the king appearing in the theatre covered with a robe of silver which sparkles in the light of the setting sun; the flatterers crying out that he is not a man but a god, and the immediate seizure of the king by intestinal pains which led to his death at the end of five days.

THE MISSIONS OF ST. PAUL<sup>1</sup>*The Sources: The Epistles and the Acts*

THE history of the infant Church is hardly known to us other than by the Acts; at most we have been able to complete the account on a few matters by the letter of St. Paul to the Galatians. The history of the missions of St. Paul, on the other hand, is clarified not only by the Acts, but also and above all by the Epistles of St. Paul. Doubtless there is a great difference between the account of St. Luke, drawn up twenty or thirty years after the events with a view to describing the progressive expansion of the Church, and the letters of St. Paul, written from day to day to settle practical and urgent questions. This difference in character and date must guide the historian in the use of his sources, but he must not neglect any of them. The Acts will provide the main framework for this history, but we must look to the Epistles for an intimate knowledge of the Apostle, his Christians, and his doctrine.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bibliography.—Consult in the first place the general works on Christian origins mentioned in the Bibliography of the preceding chapter. See also: C. Fouard, *Saint Paul*, Paris, 1908-10, 2 vols; F. Prat, *The Theology of St. Paul*, Eng. tr., 1926, 2 vols.; F. Prat, *Saint Paul*, in collection *Les Saints*, Paris, 1922; K. Pieper, *Paulus, Seine missionarische Persönlichkeit und Wirksamkeit*, Münster, 1929; H. Deissmann, *Paulus*, Tübingen, 1925; J. Gresham Machen, *The Origin of St. Paul's Religion*, New York, 1921; W. L. Knox, *St. Paul and the Church of Jerusalem*, Cambridge, 1925; A. Schweitzer, *Die Mystik des Apostels Paulus*, Tübingen, 1930; *Geschichte der paulinischen Forschung*, Tübingen, 1911.

<sup>2</sup> In this matter we differ in the first place from the radical critics of the Dutch school, who reject not only the Acts, but the totality of the Epistles of St. Paul. This school is represented by Van Manen, one of the two authors (the other is E. Hatch) of the article *Paul* in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*. This concludes: "All the representations formerly current—alike in Roman Catholic and Protestant circles—particularly during the nineteenth century—regarding the life and work of Paul the Apostle of Jesus Christ, of the Lord, and the Gentiles, must be set aside, in so far as they rest on the illusory belief that we can implicitly rely on what we read in the Acts and the 13 (14) epistles of Paul." Similarly, all the expositions of Paul's theology based on the same sources have "irrevocably passed away" (col. 3630). This extreme thesis is still maintained to-day by Van den Bergh van Eysinga, *La littérature chrétienne primitive* (Collection *Christianisme*), 1926. This polemic has at any rate the interest of showing that there are just as many—or as few—intrinsic and extrinsic reasons for rejecting the Epistle to the



## § 1. FIRST MISSION OF ST. PAUL. CYPRUS, PIDISIA, LYCAONIA<sup>3</sup>

There were some prophets in the Church at Antioch. One day, when they were performing the liturgy and fasting, the Holy Spirit said: "Separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have taken them." The prophets fasted, prayed, laid hands on them, and sent them away.

### *Cyprus*

Barnabas is mentioned here before Saul, and it seems that it was he who decided the direction to be taken: they went to Cyprus, Barnabas's birthplace, and they took as assistant his cousin, John Mark.<sup>4</sup> The missionaries disembarked at Salamina, and preached in the synagogues. Custom demanded that notable strangers should be invited to speak; the Apostles profited by this, as Jesus had done;<sup>5</sup> the discourse at Antioch in Pisidia, which we will summarise from St. Luke, tells us the nature of this preaching.

At Paphos, Barnabas and Saul found with the proconsul Sergius Paulus a magician named Barjesus, who called himself Elymas ("learned doctor"). Saul, whose preaching he endeavoured to hinder, struck him with a temporary blindness; the proconsul, a witness of this, became a believer, "admiring at the doctrine of the Lord." From that moment, Saul was called Paul.<sup>6</sup>

Romans or that to the Galatians as the Epistles to the Colossians or the Philip-  
pians (col. 3626). The disciples of the Tübingen school are more moderate: they retain, at least in part, the Pauline Epistles, but reject the Acts. Thus Weiszaecker accepts (*op. cit.*, p. 184) as authentic the following Epistles: *Galatians*, I and II *Corinthians*, I *Thessalonians*, *Philippians*, *Romans*; but he constantly tries to find contradictions between the *Acts* and the *Epistles*. This critique of the *Acts* is the weakest part in a book which is very solid in other respects. We may point out, moreover, that it is solely from *Acts* xiii-xiv that Weiszaecker himself endeavours to describe the apostolate of Paul amongst the Galatians (pp. 230-2). Nowadays the Tübingen school has lost its prestige, and the account in the *Acts* of St. Paul's activity is judged more fairly. Thus Bultmann, art. *Paulus*, in *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 1023 *et seq.*; Juelicher, *Einleitung* (1931), p. 35.

<sup>3</sup> This mission is known to us only by *Acts* xiii and xiv.

<sup>4</sup> On Mark, see above, p. 199.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 102.

<sup>6</sup> xiii, 9. Not that Saul took the name of the proconsul as freed slaves did, but probably because the Apostle had a double name (cf. "John Mark," "Simon Niger," etc.), and also because, going into a pagan land, he now uses more ordinarily his Roman name.

*Anatolia*

Cyprus offered to the two missionaries only a very restricted field of action; accordingly they took ship for Pamphylia and went to Perge. St. Paul, henceforward the head of the expedition, undertook the conquest of Anatolia. There he was to find, mingled with the Hellenes whom the Seleucids had implanted in these provinces, indigenous peoples: the Lycaonians, whom he was to evangelise at Lystra, and later on, in the northern provinces, the Galatians, and then, in the whole of the ancient kingdom of the Seleucids, the Jews, who enjoyed a privileged position. Seleucus Nicator had granted them civic rights in his capital (Antioch in Syria) and in all the cities founded by him; Antiochus the Great had continued the same policy; thus these Seleucids, hated in Palestine as persecutors, acted in Syria and Anatolia as protectors of the Jews, and could count upon their support.<sup>7</sup>

The mission which the two Apostles now commenced was to be extremely laborious: they had to cross the chain of the Taurus Mountains, redoubtable for its height, and more still because of the brigands who infested it, before they could reach the high plateaux in the interior, at a mean altitude of more than 3,200 feet.<sup>8</sup> These obstacles were not the worst: they still had to encounter the contempt of the Greeks, the grosser and more violent idolatry of the natives, and above all the powerful and bitter opposition of the Jews. Faced with this difficult expedition, which he had not expected at the beginning, the young John Mark withdrew and returned to Jerusalem.

*Antioch in Pisidia*

After the difficult crossing of the Taurus, Paul and Barnabas reached Antioch in Pisidia. On the Sabbath day, they went to the synagogue. After the reading of the Law and the prophets, the heads of the synagogue invited the strangers to address them. St. Paul spoke: his discourse, analysed at length by St. Luke (xiii,

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Ramsay, *Historical Commentary on the Galatians*, pp. 189-92. This book contains (pp. 180-232) a good description of the towns visited by St. Paul in this first mission. A shorter description is given in another book of the same author, *The Church in the Roman Empire*, ch. ii, "Localities of the First Journey" (pp. 16-58).

<sup>8</sup> Antioch in Pisidia is at a height of 3,900 feet, Iconium 3,600 feet, Lystra 3,900 feet, Derbe about the same.

16-41, makes known to us better than any other document the preaching of the Apostle in the synagogues. A first part<sup>9</sup> reminds the Jews and proselytes of the mercies of God towards Israel. Its theme is very similar to that of the discourse of Stephen, but whereas the latter wanted to bring out Israel's obstinacy, Paul sets out to bring into prominence the providential activity of God, leading up to the Christ. The second part explains the mission of Jesus; He was rejected and crucified by His people, and yet He is the Messiah: God has manifestly proved this by raising Him from the dead; this resurrection is established by the testimony of the Apostles, "who are his witnesses to the people"; the Scriptures, and especially the Psalms, confirm this testimony.<sup>10</sup> Paul concludes by an exhortation to conversion and justification by faith.<sup>11</sup>

The impression made by this preaching seems to have been very great; Paul was asked to return to the same subject on the following Sabbath, and at the end, many Jews and proselytes accompanied the Apostle home in order to receive from him further instruction. "The next sabbath day, the whole city almost came together, to hear the word of God. But the Jews, seeing the multitudes, were filled with envy, and contradicted those things which were said by Paul, blaspheming." It was thus the very success of the preaching to the Gentiles which aroused the jealousy of the Jews; it is, moreover, possible that Paul, encouraged by the numbers of the proselytes, may have announced more openly the calling of the nations. In face of Jewish opposition, Paul and Barnabas declare courageously: "To you it behoved us first to speak the word of God, but because you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold we turn to the Gentiles." The Gentiles were glad; the Jews became more violently angry, and stirring up the ladies of the city who attended the synagogue, and the chief men of the place, they had the two Apostles expelled. Paul and Barnabas shook off the dust of their feet against them, and went on to Iconium.

<sup>9</sup> The three parts of the discourse are clearly marked by the threefold apostrophe, "my brethren," with which each fresh section begins: 16, 26, 38. Cf. Prat, *Theology of St. Paul*, Vol. I, pp. 54-7.

<sup>10</sup> This argument resembles that of St. Peter in more than one feature (*Acts* ii, 25-32).

<sup>11</sup> This feature anticipates the theology of St. Paul as it will be developed in the Epistle to the Romans, and particularly in ch. x.

*Iconium*

Here their preaching was welcomed, as it had been at Antioch (xiv, 1-7): a fairly large number of Jews and Greeks were converted; the Apostles remained a long time in the city, witnessing there to the Lord, and performing many miracles. But opposition broke out, and here once more it came from the Jews; those who remained unbelievers stirred up the pagans against Paul and Barnabas; there was a riot, in which the pagans and Jews, with their *archontes* at their head, endeavoured to ill-treat and stone the missionaries. The latter fled into Lycaonia, evangelising Lystra, Derbe, and the whole region.

*Lystra*

At Lystra (xiv, 7-20) a man lame from birth listened to Paul's preaching. Paul said to him: "Stand upright on thy feet." He at once rose, and the crowd, stupefied, cried out in Lycaonian: "The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men." They called Barnabas Zeus, and Paul Hermes;<sup>12</sup> the priest of Zeus, whom they sought out, saw nothing impossible in this apparition, and hoped to utilise it for his cult; he arrived with oxen and garlands to offer sacrifice. The Apostles, preoccupied with their preaching, had not noticed the gross misunderstanding by the people; they realised it when they saw the priest and the oxen. Full of horror, they rent their garments, and rushed into the crowd, crying: "What are you doing? We are but men like you; we are come to convert you from all these vanities to the living God, who made heaven and earth and the sea and all things that are in them: who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless, he left not himself without testimony, doing good from heaven, giving rains and fruitful seasons, filling hearts with food and gladness."

Here we are no longer in the synagogue; Paul's hearers are no longer Jews or proselytes, but credulous pagans who think their gods have come down to earth; it is interesting to see how the Apostle's preaching is adapted to this audience. We learn already

<sup>12</sup> As Ramsay remarks (*The Church in the Roman Empire*, p. 57 n.), it is quite an oriental idea to see a secondary deity in the one who acts and speaks, and the supreme deity in the one who remains silent.

what the Epistle to the Romans later on will develop further: God has punished the pagans, abandoning them to their perverse ways, and yet He has left them light in the creation in which He reveals Himself.

The superstitious enthusiasm of the people of Lystra was so great that the Apostles were hard put to it to prevent them offering the sacrifice which they had prepared. But these poor pagans were easy to sway: Jews came in from Antioch and Iconium, aroused the crowd, and stoned Paul, dragging him out of the city and leaving him for dead. This was doubtless the stoning which the Apostle recalled later on (*II Cor.* xi. 25), and which fixed in his flesh the wounds of Christ (*Gal.* vi, 17). But the disciples stood around Paul; he arose, and the next day he went to Derbe with Barnabas. We may see in this very rapid cure a new miracle.

### *Derbe*

At Derbe the two missionaries gained many followers; then they retraced their steps, to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, to strengthen the faith of the disciples, reminding them that "through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God." They installed presbyters in these different churches, and by prayer and fasting commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed. They thus went through Pisidia and Pamphylia, preaching once more at Perge, and took ship at Attalia for Antioch in Syria. There they "assembled the church, and related what great things God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles."

The work accomplished during these two or three years of the mission<sup>13</sup> was wonderful; Christ said that the missionaries of Judaism compass sea and land to make one proselyte; their propaganda, though fruitful, could not be compared to this: Paul had won for Christ not only a great number of the children of Israel, and still more numerous proselytes, but idolators who had never yet been touched by any Jewish preaching. This was a great glory for the infant Church; but to many Christians, coming from Judaism and still timid, it was the occasion of a most difficult case of conscience. Were these newly converted pagans, such as these Lycaonians for instance, who only yesterday were still sacrificing to Zeus and

<sup>13</sup> This first apostolic journey of St. Paul took place between A.D. 45 and 48.

Hermes, to enter openly into the Church, without first submitting themselves to initiation into Judaism, and without even being circumcised? The case was going to be discussed and decided at Jerusalem.

## § 2. ST. PAUL AND THE JUDAISERS<sup>1</sup>

### *St. Paul's Narrative*

The controversy begun by the Judaisers and settled at Jerusalem is made known to us by two documents: the *Epistle to the Galatians* (ii, 1-10) and the *Acts* (xv, 1-35). St. Paul narrates the facts thus: fourteen years after his first voyage to Jerusalem he went up there again, urged by "a revelation." He took with him Barnabas and Titus: Barnabas was of great repute at Jerusalem; Titus, being uncircumcised, would by his very presence raise the problem which had to be solved; it was his apostolate and its fruits that Paul presented to the Church at Jerusalem.

He set forth his gospel to the Church, and then in private to the prominent men, who, as we see from what follows, were Peter, James and John, "lest perhaps I should run, or had run in vain." Certainly Paul did not doubt the divine origin of his teaching, or its truth.<sup>2</sup> But he had to make sure of the attitude of the Church at Jerusalem: if they did not approve of the freedom of his preaching, was not everything compromised?

What might well have led to these fears were the suspicions of "false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privately to

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the commentaries on the *Acts* (Jacquier, Boudou) and the *Galatians* (Lightfoot, Lagrange); W. L. Knox, *St. Paul and the Church of Jerusalem* (Cambridge, 1925); Thomas, *L'Eglise et les Judaïsants à l'âge apostolique*, in *Mélanges d'Histoire et de Littérature*, Paris, 1899; Lemonnyer, *Concile de Jérusalem*, in *Supplément to Dict. de la Bible*, 113-20.

<sup>2</sup> "The moderns," writes Lagrange, "are unanimous in rejecting the opinion of Tertullian (*Adv. Marcion*, I, 20; IV, 2; V, 3) thus set forth by St. Jerome: Paul would not have felt himself secure in his preaching of the gospel if he had not been confirmed by the authority of Peter and the other apostles. . . . Paul was certain as to the revelation he had received, and the authority it had conferred on him. . . . He had no doubt at all on the truthfulness of his gospel which he received from God." Lagrange accordingly sees here merely a question put to the Apostles: "Paul loyally put the question, the whole question with its difficulties. But he was certain in advance of the reply. It could only be in the negative." This interpretation is correct, but we may complete it, and see here a real anxiety, not as to the veracity of Paul's gospel, but as to the future of his work.

spy our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into servitude.”<sup>3</sup>

These false brethren were not able to gain anything. Titus was uncircumcised, and so he remained.<sup>4</sup> What was the attitude of the Apostles on this occasion? Paul does not tell us; the historians who try to find in every incident a trace of division between the Apostles suggest that the leaders of the church of Jerusalem brought pressure on Paul to persuade him to give way; this weakening on their part irritated the Apostle, and prepared the way for future conflicts.<sup>5</sup> The Epistle does not suggest such opposition; in face of the partisans of a rigid Judaism, Paul and Barnabas defend their cause without giving way; and the Apostles, who play the part of judges, side with them:

“Of them who seemed to be something—what they once were is nothing to me, God accepteth not the person of man—to me they that seemed to be something added nothing. But contrariwise, when they had seen that to me was committed the gospel of the uncircumcision, as to Peter was that of the circumcision . . . James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, that we should go unto the Gentiles, and they unto the circumcision: only that we should be mindful of the poor, which same thing also I was careful to do” (ii, 6-10).

We find in this passage the clear statement of an agreement; we also sense a certain impatience in its expression. We must not infer that Paul regarded as “nothing” the basis of the authority of the “notables”;<sup>6</sup> if Paul had regarded their authority as negligible he would not have gone to Jerusalem. He must have regarded it

<sup>3</sup> Where were these false brethren? Weiszaecker (*op. cit.*, p. 140) thinks they were in the Church of Jerusalem, the only one in question here, but the expression used by St. Paul suggests that they had insinuated themselves into a community of converted pagans, upon whom they wished to spy.

<sup>4</sup> At least this is the most likely and most generally received interpretation of ii, 3: “Neither Titus, who was with me, being a Gentile, was compelled to be circumcised.” On the different Latin readings, “quibus neque ad horam cessimus” and “ad horam cessimus,” see Lagrange, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-30; Lightfoot, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

<sup>5</sup> Thus Weiszaecker (*op. cit.*, p. 155), who thinks that there is a trace of this disagreement in the awkward form of verse 4. Lightfoot is more reserved, but writes that the question “is not easily answered. On the whole it seems probable that they recommended St. Paul to yield the point, as a charitable concession to the prejudices of the Jewish converts; but convinced at length by his representations, that such a concession at such a time would be fatal, they withdrew their counsel and gave him their support.”

<sup>6</sup> This is the interpretation of Loisy, rebutted by Lagrange, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

as worthy of respect, but he thought that the esteem in which the Apostles at Jerusalem were regarded did not justify the contempt which some had for himself; the Lord alone was the judge of them all; moreover, these leaders, whose authority was being extolled, had sanctioned the freedom which he was claiming.<sup>7</sup>

### *The Account in the Acts*

So far we have followed St. Paul step by step; but after the Epistle to the Galatians we must read the Acts; the meeting at Jerusalem which is narrated in ch. xv is the same as that mentioned in the Epistle to the Galatians.<sup>8</sup> But whereas the Epistle to the

<sup>7</sup> Of these three Apostles, who are "pillars," James is named the first, not because he possessed the greatest authority, but because he was regarded by the Judaizers as their leader, and consequently, in this controversy, his consent carried more weight. Between Peter and Paul there was a division, not of territory, but of race; the mission of the Apostles was universal, and especially that of Peter.

<sup>8</sup> This identity is fairly generally held, and seems to us certain. At the same time we must allow that there are difficulties at first sight. They are thus set forth by Weiszaecker, *op. cit.*, pp. 167-75: the tone and character of the two accounts are very different; the facts themselves differ; the Acts say nothing about Titus nor of the conflict at Antioch; the difference between Paul and Barnabas is mentioned later on, and attributed to another cause; the Acts paulinise Peter; if he had spoken in that way at Jerusalem, his attitude at Antioch would have been a veritable *volte face*; above all, the decree itself is irreconcilable with the Epistle to the Galatians: it quotes Talmudic regulations quite probable in themselves, but which cannot be reconciled with the narrative or the conduct of Paul: he affirms that the Apostles imposed nothing on him; he speaks differently (*I Cor.* viii, 1-13; x, 14-30) of food offered to idols; the care he takes to observe the recommendation made to him concerning alms shows by contrast his independence towards these supposed regulations. Nevertheless the decree is probably a historic fact; it left some traces in the history of the Church, but it is later than the conflict at Antioch. Hence Paul does not speak of it. Harnack (*Lukas der Arzt*, p. 91) accepts the substantial identity of the facts in the two accounts, but he thinks that the decree has been pre-dated. Lietzmann (*Geschichte der alten Kirche*, Vol. I, p. 107) suggests that the decree was made after Paul and Barnabas had left the holy city; Paul, according to him, deliberately ignored it throughout, and received official knowledge of it only at his last visit to Jerusalem (*Acts* xxi, 25). Cf. E. Hirsch, *Petrus und Paulus*, in *Zeitschrift f. N. T. Wissenschaft*, 1930, pp. 64 *et seq.* Of all the difficulties thus put forward, only one is really serious, and that is the one concerning the decree itself: we give the answer below. At the same time we must add that several exegetes consider that the two accounts cannot be harmonised: consequently they think that the visit narrated in the Epistle to the Galatians is the one mentioned in *Acts* xi; thus Le Camus, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 118; Levesque, in *Revue pratique d'Apologétique*, 1 février, 1920, p. 531; Emmett, in *The Beginnings of Christianity*, Vol. II, p. 277. This identification is not very likely. Cf. Lemonnyer, *op. cit.*, pp. 115-16; Wikenhauser, *Die Apostelgeschichte und ihr Geschichtswert*, Münster, 1921, pp. 202-25.



Galatians was written in the midst of the fight against the Judaisers in Galatia, the work of Luke was written when the controversy had died down; we no longer feel the excitement of the combat, and the sadness of the disciples who have been torn away from the Apostle and are being lost; instead we have a calm contemplation of something which happened some time ago, and which we can now understand better.<sup>9</sup> Of this whole history, which moreover is already known to his correspondents, Paul recalls only certain points which concern the controversy in which he is once more engaged, above all the decisive question of circumcision, and the agreement arrived at on this matter between the great Apostles and himself. In the narrative in the Acts, we get the whole succession of events. The Church at Antioch was disturbed by the intervention of certain people coming from Judea who maintained that those who were not circumcised according to the Mosaic rite could not be saved. Paul, Barnabas and a few others were sent to Jerusalem to see the Apostles and presbyters. On their journey through Phoenicia and Samaria they told of the conversion of the pagans, and all the brethren heard of this with great joy. At Jerusalem they were received by the Apostles and presbyters, and related to them all that God had done through them. But some Christians, converted Pharisees, rose up to maintain the thesis that the Gentiles must be circumcised and observe the law of Moses. The question thus raised was not decided in a general session, but the discussion was begun in a private conference of the Apostles and presbyters (xv, 6). After a long discussion, a new meeting was called. Peter spoke first:

“Men, brethren, you know, that in former days God made choice among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. And God who knoweth the hearts, gave testimony, giving unto them the Holy Ghost as well as to us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore, why tempt you God to put a yoke upon the necks of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? But we believe that we are saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, as they also” (xv, 7-1).

This grave and authoritative declaration was received with silence; Barnabas and Paul then recounted the signs and prodigies.

<sup>9</sup> On the character of these two sources (*Galatians* and *Acts*), see the remarks of J. Weiss, *Urchristentum*, pp. 193-5.

which God had worked through them amongst the Gentiles. Then James arose in his turn: this conversion of the Gentiles of which Simon had just spoken had been foretold by the prophets. He concluded: "For this cause I judge that they who from among the Gentiles are converted to God, are not to be disquieted, but that we write unto them that they refrain themselves from the pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood. . . ."

Then the Apostles and presbyters, together with the whole Church, decided to send to Antioch Judas and Silas with Paul and Barnabas. They charged them with a message which ought to put an end to all anxiety:

"The Apostles and ancients, brethren, to the brethren of the Gentiles that are at Antioch, and in Syria and Cilicia, greeting. Forasmuch as we have heard that some going out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, to whom we gave no commandment: It hath seemed good to us, being assembled together, to choose out men and to send them unto you with our well beloved Barnabas and Paul, men that have given their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who themselves also will, by word of mouth, tell you the same things. For it hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us to lay no further burden upon you than these necessary things: that you abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication; from which things keeping yourselves, you shall do well. Fare ye well" (xv, 23-29).

### *The Decree*

The decree comprised two parts, of very different import: the first, the part of most weight, was the charter of liberty accorded to the new converts: "It has seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us to lay no further burden upon you than these necessary things" (xv, 28). This decision corresponds directly to the question which had been put: can one be saved without receiving circumcision? (xv, 1). That was in fact the chief point in the controversy, as we see not only from the Epistle to the Galatians, but by the two speeches of Peter and James narrated in the Acts. This vital question was decided in the sense requested by Paul, and he could say that he had won his point, and that nothing had been imposed upon him.

But this decision is followed by four precepts, the text and meaning of which must be determined.<sup>10</sup> The text is found in a double form, Eastern and Western. The former contains four prohibitions of a legal character: "It hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us to lay no further burden upon you than what is necessary, namely: that you abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication; from which things keeping yourselves you shall do well. Fare ye well." The Western form contains only three prohibitions, but it usually adds the golden rule; all these regulations have the character of moral precepts rather than of ritual observances: ". . . that you abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from fornication, and that you do not to others what you would not have them do to you. From which things keeping yourselves you shall do well. Walk in the Holy Ghost. Amen."

Of these two redactions, it is the former which is authentic; the manuscript tradition shows this, and also the text itself; the Western text is clearly an interpretation, arising from a desire to give to the decree a perpetual value, and to this end it effaces the ritual and Jewish character of the observances. This tendency is still more manifest in the variants which forbid "idolatry, homicide, impurity."<sup>11</sup>

The ritual precepts, set forth in the Eastern form of the decree, are aimed at teaching the converted pagans to respect what the Jews regarded as precepts of the natural law: to abstain from food offered to idols, from fornication,<sup>12</sup> and also from the eating of blood.<sup>13</sup>

This decree applied directly only to Christian converts from among the Gentiles; on the occasion of the dispute at Antioch, St. Paul very soon drew the inferences it implied for the faithful from Judaism, and St. Peter accepted his view. The decisions given later to the Corinthians (*I Cor.* x, 25) on food offered to idols do not contradict the prescriptions of Jerusalem; they required respect for the conscience of others, which was the very principle of James (*Acts* xv, 21); but they were communicated to a community in

<sup>10</sup> This decree is quoted or referred to three times: *Acts* xv, 19-20; xv, 28-9; xxi, 25. In these three passages it is found in the double form, Eastern and Western.

<sup>11</sup> Coppieters, *op. cit.*, pp. 50-8; Lemonnyer, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

<sup>12</sup> Instead of "illicit marriages." Cf. Coppieters, *op. cit.*, pp. 47-8.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Lagrange, *Épître aux Galates*, p. xlvii.

which the Judæo-Christians no longer occupied the position which they held at Jerusalem, or even at Antioch, ten years earlier.<sup>14</sup> The condemnation of the practices of the Gnostic Judaisers (*Col.* ii, 21; *I Tim.* iv, 1) is concerned with things quite different from the observances imposed by the decree.

The prohibitions passed by the Council of Jerusalem were long observed in the Church; towards the end of the second century, the apologists and the martyrs of Lyons invoke this custom in order to make the pagans realise the horror Christians had for blood and for the worship of idols.<sup>15</sup> Later on, and down to the Middle Ages, canonists, especially in the East, will regard this legislation as still binding.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, the example of St. Paul shows sufficiently that these interdictions were meant to be only temporary; what was definitive was the principle of freedom: circumcision is not necessary for salvation. The solemn affirmation of this principle gives a decisive importance to the Council of Jerusalem, and that is why St. Luke has brought it out so prominently; this account is one of the chief parts of the Book of Acts. God there elevates souls by degrees, by the vision at Joppa, by the conversion of Cornelius, as Peter recalls in his discourse; and we may look back even further into the past, and see in the oracles of the prophets the promise of this calling of the Gentiles. That is what St. James contemplates and admires: "To the Lord was his own work known from the beginning of the world."

This divine light does not dissipate all the shadows; Christian freedom does not dispense from the consideration which the Jews claimed, and to which St. Paul will adapt himself: he who did not circumcise Titus will circumcise Timothy, he will submit himself at Cenchrae, and later at Jerusalem, to the practices of the Nazarites. But this condescension must never compromise either the

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Coppieters, *op. cit.*, pp. 227-8. Lietzmann in his edition of *I Cor.* (note on ch. v, p. 25) remarks that Paul alludes to a letter written to the Corinthians (v, 9); the two points he discusses, offerings to idols and fornication (v, 9-13; vi, 12-20, and viii, 1-13) bear on the two prohibitions which were likely to cause most difficulties; these new explanations would be a reply to the latter which the Corinthians wrote to the Apostle on the reception of his first letter. These hypotheses are not unlikely. Much less likely is the suggestion that the decree was made known to the Corinthians by St. Peter when passing through their city.

<sup>15</sup> Tertullian, *Apolog.*, 9; Minucius Felix, *Octav.*, 30; Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.*, V, 1, 26; Origen, *Contra Celsum*, viii, 30.

<sup>16</sup> Texts cited by Boudou, *Acts*, pp. 342-3; the most recent is that of Theodore Balsamon (12th cent.), and in the West, Pope St. Gregory III (731-41).

freedom of the Christian or the unity of the Church. It will be understood that these opposite preoccupations will give rise to more than one case of conscience which will be difficult to solve.

### *The Dispute at Antioch*

This incident is known to us only by the Epistle to the Galatians (ii, 11 *et seq.*). This passage sets forth sufficiently clearly the succession of events. It was after the Council of Jerusalem that Peter went to Antioch. It is certain that the dispute was not a scene arranged beforehand by Peter and Paul, as has sometimes been supposed,<sup>17</sup> and that it was really the Apostle Peter who was concerned, and not another disciple named Cephas.<sup>18</sup> These flimsy hypotheses have been invented in order to efface a difference between the two Apostles from the history: an excusable desire, but one to which, here as always, we must prefer respect for the text and for facts. Moreover, if carefully read, there is nothing in the narrative which should embarrass us: on the contrary, it gives us valuable information on the life of the Church.

We note, in the first place, the presence of Peter at Antioch. We do not know when or why he went there, but we find him there. The Acts do not mention his journey; this fact, amongst others, shows that Peter's activity extended beyond Palestine, and we cannot confine it to what the Acts mention explicitly.

On his arrival there, Peter did the same as Paul and Barnabas, living and eating with converted pagans. In this he went beyond the letter of the decree of Jerusalem: he was a Jew by birth, and he adopted without fear the freedom accorded to those coming from paganism. But some people came from James's circle,<sup>19</sup> and Peter, in order not to shock them, changed his attitude:

"When they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them who were of the circumcision. And to his dissimulation, the rest

<sup>17</sup> On this interpretation and its history, cf. Lightfoot, *Galatians*, pp. 130 *et seq.*

<sup>18</sup> Hypothesis of Clement of Alexandria, mentioned by Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.*, I, 12 (Lightfoot, *ibid.*, p. 129).

<sup>19</sup> Lagrange thinks that "these were probably people sent by James." The text does not say this expressly, and several exegetes and historians translate: "people from the entourage of James" (Cornely, Zahn, Thomas). Lightfoot, without coming to a definite decision, leans towards the former interpretation; this interpretation is admissible, but I do not think it imperative, or even the most likely one.

of the Jews consented, so that Barnabas also was led by them into that dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly unto the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all: If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of the Gentiles, and not as the Jews do, how dost thou compel the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? (*Gal.* ii, 12-14).

This false step by Peter has been very rightly described by Tertullian as "an error of attitude and not of doctrine" (*Praescr.*, 23). Peter doubtless regarded these observances as indifferent, and in order to avoid scandalising the Jews, he adapted himself to their ideas, as Paul himself did on other occasions;<sup>20</sup> but here this accommodation led to very serious consequences; the other Judæo-Christians, including Barnabas himself, imitated Peter and withdrew from the Gentiles. This shows how great was the authority of the head of the Church even at Antioch, and in the presence of Paul; but the more powerful his ascendancy, the more prudent had to be its exercise. St. Peter's complacency threatened to rend the Church asunder, or to compel the pagans to become Jews. This latter consequence was directly contrary to the statements which Peter himself had made at Jerusalem. It was therefore to this point that Paul at once brought him back; and putting the question higher, he repeated the principle of salvation by Christ which both admitted equally:

"We by nature are Jews, and not of the Gentiles, sinners. But knowing that man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, we also believe in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law. . . ." <sup>21</sup>

Paul, intent on his controversy with his opponents in Galatia, does not relate the result of the incident, but there is no question that he gained his point: otherwise he would not have derived from this dispute an argument against the judaisers.<sup>22</sup>

Thus by degrees the Church freed herself: at Jerusalem the

<sup>20</sup> *Acts* xvi, 3; xviii, 18; xxi, 26.

<sup>21</sup> *Gal.* ii, 15-16. Paul's discourse is here addressed to the Galatians, to whom he preaches salvation by faith.

<sup>22</sup> If Paul convinced Peter, he must also have convinced Barnabas, and hence we must not look to this incident for the origin of the separation of the two Apostles (*Acts* xv, 36-9). Luke explains it by a disagreement about Mark, and there is no reason to doubt his testimony.

liberty of pagan converts was recognised, but nothing was decided in the case of Christians coming from Judaism itself. This latter point, however, was decided implicitly; it was impossible to maintain the unity of the Church without granting to Jews the liberty accorded to the pagans. This inference was explicitly drawn at Antioch. The solution of these matters had a tremendous importance for the further development of Christianity; at the beginning it could be regarded as a Jewish sect, at a time when Judaism could appear as a comprehensive system which included within itself the Nazarenes, side by side with the Pharisees, Essenes, Sadducees, and others. But henceforth there could be no mistake: it was Christianity which revealed itself as the great system comprising Jews and pagans, and which united both together by faith in Christ.

This liberty, however, which was essential in mixed communities, naturally took longer to penetrate the church at Jerusalem itself, composed as it was almost entirely of converted Jews. They rejoiced at the propagation of Christianity amongst the pagans, they refused to impose upon them the yoke of the law, but they did not wish to abandon it themselves. This was the attitude of St. James (*Acts* xxi, 20 *et seq.*); and St. Paul respected it, since he accommodated himself at James's request to the practice of the Nazarites (*ibid.* 26). The martyrdom of James, the exodus of Christians to Pella, the fall of Jerusalem, were little by little to loosen the bonds which linked these Christian faithful to the Temple and the Law.<sup>23</sup>

### *The Church and the Judaisers*

In all this the Church was patient, and reverent towards the past: she did nothing to precipitate the rupture; as long as God allowed it, she did not condemn the pious regard which the Jerusalem Christians retained for the Law which they had so revered and loved; these, moreover, like Paul and Peter, did not in any way seek in the works of the Law the source of salvation, but found this in faith in Christ;<sup>24</sup> and if out of piety they continued to carry

<sup>23</sup> Cf. *infra*. ch. v, § 1.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Lagrange, *Épître aux Galates*, p. liv: "James's group, and James its head, recognised once for all that the Gentiles could be saved without the observance of the Law of Moses. Hence they must, according to the most elementary logic, have believed that salvation, even for the Jews, did not depend on the Law as its prin-

the burden of the Law, they abstained from imposing it on the Gentiles.<sup>25</sup>

Other observers of the Law were less tolerant; not content with submitting to it themselves, they tried to impose it on all, even on Christian converts from the Gentiles; such were the preachers of a perverted gospel whom Paul had to combat in his Epistle to the Galatians.<sup>26</sup> Others, again, began to mingle gnostic practices with their Jewish traditions; these were denounced already in the Epistle to the Romans, and still more in the letter to the Colossians, the letter of St. Jude, and the Second Epistle of St. Peter.<sup>27</sup>

These combats already foreshadow the great crisis which in the second century will set Christianity and Gnosticism one against the other.

The struggles of the Apostolic Church against the Judeo-Christians and against the Gnostic Jews were destined to be bitter, but even for observers from outside, the issue could not be doubtful. The Church was conscious that she was free, and the mistress of her destiny. Agar might continue to serve, but Sara was free with the freedom wherewith Christ had made her free.

### § 3. THE SECOND MISSION OF ST. PAUL (AUTUMN OF A.D. 49 TO AUTUMN OF A.D. 52)

#### *Paul and Barnabas*

In the course of his first mission, St. Paul had made contact with that pagan world the conquest of which God had reserved for him. His rapid journey beyond the Taurus chain across the high plateaux of Anatolia had brought home to him the distress of men's souls and their immense religious needs, and the power of the Gospel to meet them. He knew at what price these conquests would have to be purchased; the wounds of Christ impressed on his flesh at Lystra reminded him of it, but he also knew that these sufferings would be fruitful, and that if death acted in him, it was in order

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ciple. Peter said so expressly: James, if he was consistent, must have thought so, and if he had not thought so, Paul would not have been on terms of ecclesiastical communion with him."

<sup>25</sup> Cf. *infra*, ch. v, § 1, and Lagrange, *Galates*, lvi *et seq.*

<sup>26</sup> Cf. *infra*, pp. 257-9.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Bk. II.



to produce life in the souls of others. His apostolic experience had been consecrated by the Council of Jerusalem with a fresh guarantee: Peter was to have the apostolate of the circumcision, Paul that of the Gentiles. The conflict provoked by the Judaisers was, if not ended for ever, at least settled in principle; Paul could set out again, strong in a new assurance, for the immense field of the apostolate which he had seen on his first journey.

He therefore said to Barnabas: "Let us return and visit our brethren in all the cities wherein we have preached the word of the Lord" (*Acts* xv, 36). Barnabas accepted without hesitation, but he wanted to have with him his cousin Mark. Paul, who remembered the defection of this young man in the preceding expedition, did not want to take him this time. Neither Barnabas nor Paul felt it possible to give way; they therefore parted. Paul went to Cilicia; Barnabas, accompanied by Mark, left for Cyprus, his native land. The Acts henceforth tell us nothing about his apostolic career; we are unable to make up for this silence;<sup>1</sup> but we ought not to forget all that the infant Church owed to Barnabas. In the earliest days he had sold his possessions and laid the price at the feet of the Apostles; he had brought to them a still more precious gift when he presented Saul to them, though mistrusted by the faithful, and became surety for his conversion, and also when later on he went to seek him at Tarsus and conducted him to Antioch, thereby giving a decisive impulse to the evangelising of that great city. Now, after many years of close collaboration, the two friends separated; but this brief disagreement was to help still further the expansion of the Gospel: Barnabas and Mark<sup>2</sup> were going to preach in Cyprus, while a much wider horizon was opening before Paul.

In place of his former companion, Paul took Silas. He was one of the prophets of the Church at Jerusalem, sent by the latter to Antioch (xv, 32); this fact heightened his repute amongst the converted Jews, and in the official world, Hellenic and Roman, his privilege as a Roman citizen would be a safeguard for him.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> We shall refer later (Bk. II) to the so-called Epistle of Barnabas; but this work, written about the year 130, is not by the Apostle, and does not even claim to have been written by him.

<sup>2</sup> Mark, after having been the companion of Barnabas, became that of Peter, and once more the friend of Paul: *Philem.* 24; *Col.* iv, 10; *II Tim.* iv, 11.

<sup>3</sup> Much later (*I Pet.* v, 12) Silas appears as Peter's secretary; Silas and Mark were thus two links between Paul and Peter, and between the communities consisting of Christians coming from Judaism and the pagan mission.

### Timothy

Paul, who never abandoned the communities he had founded, commenced his new expedition by visiting those in Lycaonia. "He came to Derbe and Lystra. And behold there was a certain disciple there named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman that believed, but his father was a Gentile. To this man the brethren that were in Lystra and Iconium gave a good testimony. Paul decided to take him with him" (xvi, 1-3). Towards the end of his life, the Apostle reminded Timothy, now his inseparable companion, of these things: "I have a remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day, desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy; calling to mind that faith which is in thee unfeigned, which also dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and in thy mother Eunice, and I am certain that in thee also" (*II Tim.*, i, 4-5).

"He therefore took Timothy and circumcised him, because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Gentile." This step has astonished many historians;<sup>4</sup> Paul, however, was not changing his attitude; at Jerusalem he had refused to circumcise Titus in order to affirm the liberty of converted pagans; in the case of Timothy, there was no longer any question of principle, but one of prudence: born of a Jewish mother, the child ought, according to the legislation of Israel, to have been circumcised; in the eyes of the Jews, so long as he had not been subjected to this rite, he would be regarded as a renegade, and could not accompany Paul into the synagogues.<sup>5</sup> In this matter, as in so many others, Paul became a Jew to the Jews.

### Galatia

So now, with his two companions, Paul began the conquest of the world. Already in the course of his first mission, the Apostle had had a hard task; he had crossed the high chain of the Taurus by bad roads infested by brigands; he had gone through the plateaux of the interior from Antioch in Pisidia to Derbe; beyond the

<sup>4</sup> "In the case of Timothy, Paul did precisely the contrary of what he had done at Jerusalem in the case of Titus. . . . The contradiction is so clear that we must either give up the narrative of the Acts or that of Paul: the choice is not doubtful" (Weiszaecker, *op. cit.*, p. 179. On the other hand, J. Weiss thinks that Paul gave way in both cases: he circumcised Titus at Jerusalem, just as he circumcised Timothy at Lystra (*Urchristentum*, p. 203 and n. 1).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Boudou, *Actes*, p. 349.

Hellenic zone dotted with Jewish colonies he had made contact with the Lycaonian peoples; but he had stopped there, without penetrating into that immense Anatolia which extended before him towards the north, as far as the eye could see, with the high and sunburnt plateaux of Phrygia, and beyond them the deep valleys and rocky gorges of Galatia. It was in that direction that he now went, and when he had gone through Phrygia and Galatia, he wanted to descend by the wide valley of the Hermus towards Sardis, Smyrna, and the coast of Asia Minor, from whence for a thousand years Hellenism had spread throughout the East. But the Holy Spirit willed otherwise. Then he wanted to go through Mysia, Bithynia, Brusa, Nicea and Nicomedia, but once again the Spirit of Jesus opposed this journey. Accordingly, he turned once more towards the West, and finally arrived at Troas. Since their departure from Syria, the three travellers had walked on foot for over nine hundred miles;<sup>6</sup> they had traversed from north to south and from east to west the whole of Anatolia. There many races were mingled together; the Greeks had colonised all the coast, and the Jews had established their settlements. Going inland, there were new peoples to encounter: those enthusiastic Phrygians who at that time were zealous worshippers of the Great Mother, and who, after being converted to Christianity, were in the second century to be led astray by the prophecies of Montanus. When Paul arrived at Pessinonte to the north of the Phrygian plateau, he was already in the land of the Galatians.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> In his study on *Roads and Travel in the New Testament* (Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, Extra Vol., col. 385), Ramsay estimates the distance from Troas to Antioch by Philadelphia at 880 Roman miles, and by Laodicea 930. The route which the Apostle followed was much longer.

<sup>7</sup> Until the last century, the Galatia of which there is mention here (*Acts* xvi, 6) had always been regarded as the region inhabited by the Galatians with Ancyra as its capitol, and it was thought that it was to these Galatians that Paul wrote. But another view finds these Galatians in the southern region evangelised by St. Paul in the course of his first mission: Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe. This opinion, set forth in 1825 by a Dane, Mynster, was defended in 1867 by G. Perrot in his thesis *De Galatia provincia Romana*. Renan accepted it. Ramsay gave much weight and favor to this opinion; during some thirty years many exegetes and historians adopted it, e.g. Cornely, Le Camus, MacGiffert, Lemonnyer, J. Weiss. Nowadays it is more commonly abandoned. We cannot discuss the matter here: the materials will be found in Lightfoot, *Galatians*, pp. 18-21; Lagrange, *Épître aux Galates*, pp. xiii-xxvii; Lietzmann, *Galater*, pp. 3-4; Wikenhauser, *Apostelgeschichte*, pp. 227-9; Boudou, *Actes*, pp. 352-3. The establishment of the Galatians in Eastern Phrygia took place about 278 B.C. Cf. Jullian, *Histoire de la Gaule*, Vol. I, pp. 303-5, 367-9, 514-5. The three

Of the evangelisation of Galatia the Acts tell us nothing; but the Epistle of St. Paul reveals to us the great welcome which the sick Apostle had received from the Galatians, and the close relations, full of gratitude and of paternal confidence, which existed between him and them:

"Be ye as I, because I also am as you: brethren, I beseech you: you have not injured me at all. And you know how through infirmity of the flesh, I preached the gospel to you heretofore: and your temptation in my flesh. You despised not, nor rejected: but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. Where is then your blessedness? For I bear you witness that, if it could be done, you would have plucked out your own eyes and would have given them to me" (*Gal.* iv, 12-15).

To these disciples who had received him with such open hearts, the Apostle had presented Christ crucified; his preaching had been so vivid that it set Christ<sup>8</sup> forth before their very eyes (iii, 1); and together with the faith, the Holy Spirit had been poured out into their hearts. But then this spiritual movement, begun so energetically, had been stopped, or rather diverted towards an illusory end. Already when passing through, Paul had feared this perversion and had endeavoured to forestall it; he had warned the Galatians: "If any one preach to you a gospel besides that which you have received, let him be anathema." The warning had been received submissively, but the Galatians, impressionable and fickle, must have forgotten it very quickly.<sup>9</sup>

It was necessary that Paul should, towards the year 56, rescue his former disciples from the seduction of Judaism, by his epistle written to them from Macedonia.

This evangelisation of Galatia is mentioned in the Acts only by

Gallic tribes which settled there kept, according to St. Jerome, *In Gal.*, ii, praef. (P.L., xxvi, 357), the use of the Gallic tongue; nevertheless Greek was the official language of the nation, and as in all the East, was also the language of commercial relations.

<sup>8</sup> The Greek means literally to placard.

<sup>9</sup> The Galatians showed themselves more than once excessively submissive; they had undergone not only Hellenic but also Phrygian influences: "The Asiatic Artemis received the homage of the barbarians, and the wives of their leaders agreed to look after its altars and to appear in its processions. When the territory of Pessinonte had been attached to the Tolistoboiens, the Great Mother who reigned there became the object of their devotion, and the priesthood was soon taken from amongst the Celts themselves" (Jullian, *Histoire de la Gaule*, Vol. I, p. 367). The Galatians were established at Pessinonte after 189; a Galatian was high priest in 163 and 159 (Dittenberger, *Or. inscr.*, n. 315, I, p. 484, quoted by Jullian, *ibid.*, n. 12).

a word; evidently Luke hastens on towards Macedonia. For the rest, the Spirit urged Paul there. In these few lines, three decisive spiritual directions are mentioned: the first, turning the Apostle away from Asia, directs him towards Phrygia and Galatia; the second turns him away from Bithynia and leads him to Troas; the third is the most solemn of all:

“A vision was shewed to Paul in the night, which was a man of Macedonia standing and beseeching him and saying: ‘Pass over into Macedonia, and help us.’” (*Acts xvi, 9*).

At once the decision was taken: “Immediately we sought to go into Macedonia, being assured that God had called us to preach the Gospel to them.”<sup>10</sup>

### *Macedonia*

The Macedonian mission which began through this divine call was to give St. Paul some of the greatest joys in his apostolate; these joys would indeed be accompanied by many sufferings and persecutions; all his conquests, here as everywhere else, were dearly bought; nevertheless, in Macedonia the Apostle was less contradicted and less opposed in his churches; he met at Philippi and at Thessalonica with an attachment to his person which was nowhere so devoted or so faithful. Of these two churches, the former remained the dearest and the closest to the Apostle; Thessalonica came first in the number of its members and by reason of its situation as chief town in the province.

### *Philippi*

From Troas to Neapolis by Samothracia, the sea journey was quick and took only two days;<sup>11</sup> from Neapolis the missionaries at

<sup>10</sup> It is here at Troas that the account of the journey written in the first person commences; the “we” appears here (*xvi, 10*); it disappears at Philippi (*xvi, 17*); it reappears later in Macedonia, perhaps in this same town of Philippi, and on the arrival of St. Paul in Jerusalem (*xx, 5-15; xvi, 1-18*); lastly, we find it again in the account of the sea-crossing until the arrival at Rome (*xxvii, 1-xxviii, 16*). From this it is reasonable to infer that Luke joined the Apostle at Troas, was left by him at Philippi, rejoined him there later on, and followed him to Jerusalem, and then to Rome.

<sup>11</sup> Later on Luke allows six days for the passage from Neapolis to Troas (*xx, 6*).

once went on about seven miles to Philippi, "the chief city of the province of Macedonia, a colony."<sup>12</sup> The city was governed by a duumvirate of two prætors, assisted by lictors; it was proud of being ruled according to Roman law;<sup>13</sup> the Jews seem to have been very few in number there, and to have had no synagogue. On the Sabbath Paul and his companions went to the *proseuche*, on the banks of the river; there they found some women and preached to them. The Lord "opened the heart" of a certain Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira. She was baptised with her household, and said to the Apostle: "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and abide there." The hospitality offered with open heart was gratefully accepted, and thus was formed the first nucleus of the Church of Philippi.

The Apostle nevertheless continued to frequent the *proseuche*; on the way there with his companions he was importuned by the cries of a girl with a pythonical spirit.<sup>14</sup> Several days in succession she repeated as they passed by: "These men are the servants of the most high God, who preach unto you the way of salvation." In the end, Paul said to the spirit, "I command thee, in the name of Jesus Christ, to go out from her." The exorcism was at once effective; but the masters of this woman, having thus lost all the profit they had been making by her, brought the missionaries before the magistrates. They did not accuse them of having exorcised their slave, but they said: "These men disturb our city; they are Jews, who preach a fashion which it is not lawful for us to receive nor observe, being Romans." The people were aroused against them; the magistrates had them scourged and put in prison; the jailor shut them up in the interior dungeon, and made their feet

<sup>12</sup> The town of Philippi had been founded by Philip of Macedon on the site of the ancient Crenides ("the Springs"). It overlooked the rich plain of the Gangites, a tributary of the Strymon; Cæsar had established a Roman colony there; Augustus, in memory of his victory over Brutus and Cassius, had named it Colonia Augusta Julia Philippensis, and had given it the *jus italicum*; according to Dio Cassius (II, 4) he had transported there the inhabitants of the Italian cities which had supported Antony. On Philippi, cf. Lightfoot, *Philippians*, pp. 46-64.

<sup>13</sup> Paul alludes to this in his Epistle, i, 27; iii, 20.

<sup>14</sup> Macedonia was well known for its serpents. Lucian relates that it was there that Alexander of Abonouteichos had purchased for a few obols the python which he then used to give his pretended oracles (*Alexander*, 7). In such a matter it was easy to pass on from imposture to sorcery; the Philippian slave had taken the step.

fast in the stocks. During the night there was an earthquake, and the gates of the prison were opened. Thinking that his prisoners were escaping, the desperate jailor was going to kill himself; Paul and Silas reassured him, and preached to him, and that very night he and all his family were baptised. At daybreak the magistrates sent the lictors to release the prisoners; the jailor transmitted the message, but Paul replied: "They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men that are Romans, and have cast us into prison, and now do they thrust us out privately? Not so, but let them come and let us out themselves" (xvi, 37).

The magistrates were alarmed, and came to present their apologies, and begged the missionaries to leave the city. Paul and his friends returned to the house of Lydia, exhorted the brethren, and departed.

This scene, like the evangelisation of Philippi, has been reported by St. Luke in much detail; <sup>15</sup> contrary to what had happened and would happen everywhere else, the Jews were in no way responsible for the expulsion of the Apostle; the pagans alone had carried out the affair, and we see from this fact what their reactions to the Gospel, their anger, or their fear could become. In addition—and this is of still greater interest to us—this narrative shows us in Paul that apostolic zeal which no assaults could overcome, and also the Roman and Christian dignity which defends honour and demands reparation.

Paul left Philippi, but he ever retained a special tenderness towards this church. He never had to reproach the Philippians for dissensions such as those which divided the church of Corinth, nor for the weaknesses which the Galatians manifested in face of Judaizing threats. In his epistle, Paul will utter hard words against dogs, and the false circumcision (iii, 2), but though he thinks it prudent to warn the faithful against these, there is no indication that the church had been already affected by this contagion. The Philippians were the "joy and crown" of the Apostle (iv, 1); they alone had ministered to his needs (iv, 15), and they were still doing so. They had also suffered: "Unto you it is given for Christ, not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him" (i, 29).

<sup>15</sup> As we have pointed out above (p. 178, n. 2), Luke seems to have remained six years at Philippi; and so he takes a particular interest in the history of the origins of this church.

*Thessalonica*

"And when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews" (xvii, 1). Paul must then have found there an important centre of Jewish life, and hence a starting point for the preaching of the Gospel. He established himself in the capital of Macedonia;<sup>16</sup> when Christianity had taken root there, it would expand thence all through the province.

According to his custom, Paul went to the synagogue, and on three sabbaths in succession he preached out of the Scriptures, "that the Christ was to suffer and to rise again from the dead, and that this Christ is Jesus, whom I preach to you" (xvii, 3). Some Jews were converted, a great number of Greek proselytes and many women of the best families. Here particularly we see that the converts of the Apostles were made above all from among the proselytes; prejudices were less tenacious in them than in the Jews, and good will was greater. We shall find also at Thessalonica, as at Philippi and at Berea, that from the first, women played an important part in the work of evangelisation.<sup>17</sup>

After these three sabbaths, Paul probably left the synagogue and carried on his work outside. His stay at Thessalonica was fairly long; on two occasions he received help from the Philippians (*Phil.*, iv, 16). Moreover, all the time he was preaching he gained his own livelihood by working. A few months after his departure, in his first letter to the Thessalonians, he put before their eyes a living and touching picture of the life which he had led amongst them:

<sup>16</sup> Founded on the site of the ancient Therma by Cassander, the son-in-law of Philip of Macedonia, about 315 B.C., and called by him Thessalonica in honour of his wife, Thessalonica had speedily become a flourishing city. In 168 Macedonia had been conquered by the Romans; Thessalonica then became the capital of *Macedonia secunda*. In 146 the different districts were reunited and the town became in fact the capital of the whole province. In 49 it was Pompey's headquarters; in the second civil war it was on the side of Octavius and Antony, and received in reward the rights of a free city; its magistrates were politarchs, numbering five or six. Cf. Milligan, *Thessalonians*, pp. xxi *et seq.*; *Dict. of the Bible*, Vol. IV, 315.

<sup>17</sup> Lightfoot, *Philippians*, pp. 54-6, points out this fact, and links it up with the social part which women seem to have played in Macedonia, more than in the rest of Greece. Cf. also Ramsay, *St. Paul the Traveller*, p. 227: "In Macedonia, as in Asia Minor, women occupied a much freer and more influential position than in Athens, and it is in conformity with the known facts that such prominence is assigned to them in the three Macedonian cities."



"Never have we used, at any time, the speech of flattery, as you know, nor taken an occasion of covetousness, God is witness: Nor sought we glory of men, neither of you, nor of others, whereas we might have been burdensome to you, as the apostles of Christ: but we became little ones in the midst of you. As a nurse should cherish her children: so desirous of you, we would gladly impart unto you not only the gospel of God, but also our own souls, because you were become most dear unto us. For you remember, brethren, our labour and toil, working night and day, lest we should be chargeable to any of you, we preached among you the gospel of God" (*I Thess.* ii, 5-9).

Such care bestowed on the whole community and on each of its members (ii, 11) bore its fruit: the Christians of Thessalonica became models for Macedonia and Achaia (i, 6-10); the faith was so widespread that the attacks of the Jews put the city in an uproar (*Acts* xvii, 5). For the rest, Paul did not work alone; Silas and Timothy supported him; and in his two letters he associates them with himself as he had associated them in his work. Also in Thessalonica itself he had found helpers in his apostolate (*I Thess.*, v, 12).

This apostolic activity and its success irritated those Jews who had remained unbelievers; they stirred up a band of rogues on the market place, and led them to the house of Jason, where Paul was staying. They wanted to take him before the assembly of the people, but the Apostle was not to be found. And so instead, Jason and a few of the brethren were taken before the politarchs:

"These people," cried the Jews, "have already turned the whole world upside down, and now they have come here: Jason has harboured them. They all act against the laws of Cæsar, saying that there is another king, Jesus" (*Acts* xvii, 6-7).

We recognise here the accusations brought forward by the Jews at Jerusalem before Pilate. They will be constantly made against Christians, and there could not be more dangerous ones.<sup>18</sup> The crowd and the magistrates felt that the least they could do was to require bail from Jason and the others.

<sup>18</sup> We find them again in the Apocalypse (*infra*, ch. v, § 2) and often in the Acts of the martyrs, e.g. the Scillitan martyrs. On this subject, see the discussion in Tertullian's *Apology*, 34.

*Berea*

The persecution which broke out must have been patiently borne by the church of Thessalonica (*I Thess.* ii, 14; iii, 8), but the Apostle could not remain there longer without seriously compromising his host and his disciples. He therefore left that night for Berea, fifty miles to the south-west of Thessalonica. There he found Jews who were better disposed, and received the word gladly, "daily searching the scriptures, whether these things were so." Many of them were converted, as well as many Greek ladies of rank, and a good number of men (*Acts* xvii, 11-12). But as soon as the Jews in Thessalonica heard of this, they came to Berea to rouse the people. The brethren then sent Paul away; a number of them took him as far as Athens and then returned, taking to Silas and Timothy, who were still at Berea, instructions to rejoin him as soon as possible.<sup>19</sup>

*The Macedonian Churches*

This brief outline of the beginnings of the Macedonian churches can be supplemented by a few facts mentioned in the epistles. In spite of their generous fidelity, the Thessalonians seem to have required warnings against impurity and injustice (*I Thess.* iv, 1-12). These two vices were particularly rampant in the pagan circles in which they lived<sup>20</sup> and they had to react vigorously against them. Above all, they were perplexed concerning the Second Coming: were the dead to be without their part therein?<sup>21</sup> St. Paul tells them in reply that the dead will rise again first, and precede

<sup>19</sup> We gather from this fact that in the little apostolic band it was Paul who was aimed at: once he had gone, his two companions could remain and carry on the work without molestation. Amongst the associates of Paul we shall find later on (*Acts* xx, 4) Sopater of Berea. Tradition makes Onesimus the first Bishop of Berea (*Constitut. Apost.*, vii, 46).

<sup>20</sup> Fornication (*I Thess.* iv, 3) had been expressly forbidden by the decree of Jerusalem; at Corinth as at Thessalonica Christians had to be deterred from it (*I Cor.* vi, 15; vii, 2). Dishonest dealing (*I Thess.* iv, 6) was no less prevalent: the Christians of Bithynia, interrogated by Pliny, told him that one of the promises they made when they became Christians was to return the deposits they had received.

<sup>21</sup> Milligan compares *II (IV) Esdras* v, 41: "Et dixi: Sed ecce Domine, tu praeas his qui in fine sunt, et quid facient qui ante nos sunt aut nos aut hi qui post nos? Et dixit ad me: Coronae adsimilabo iudicium meum; sicut non novissimorum tarditas, sic non priorum velocitas."

the living in the triumph of Christ (iv, 13-18); he also reminds them that the Day of the Lord will come unexpectedly, and that they must therefore live watchfully (v, 1-11).

The second letter followed soon after the first.<sup>22</sup> It reveals the same state of fervour in the church of Thessalonica (i, 3), but it undeceives the faithful, who thought, on the strength of communications from the Spirit, or of a pretended letter from Paul, that the Day had already come. The Apostle reminds them of what he had taught them concerning the signs which would precede the great event. In the interval, they must work, as he himself has given them an example. These two letters reveal to us a lively interest in eschatology, degenerating sometimes into a feverish expectation of the great day. This state of mind of the Thessalonians enables us to understand better the incidents in their evangelisation, and in particular, the calumnies of the Jews concerning the king Jesus.

The excitement which had been so great seems to have been quietened by the exhortations of St. Paul. Docile and faithful, these Macedonian churches appear to us as true types of Pauline churches, neither Judaising nor Gnostic, after the manner of the pagans. The influence of the Apostle seems to have spread gradually there from house to house, and he seems to have based himself directly on the words of the Lord, rather than upon texts of Scripture, which he recalls more frequently elsewhere in centres of Jewish thought.

### *Athens*

From Macedonia St. Paul went to Athens. He wrote to the Thessalonians (*I Thess.* iii, 1) saying that, being unable himself to return to them, he was sending them Timothy, and was himself staying alone at Athens. The Acts alone make known to us his activity during this stay.<sup>23</sup> According to his custom, Paul spoke with the Jews and proselytes in the synagogue, and in the market place with all whom he met (*Acts* xvii, 17). He was full of indignation and sorrow at the sight of the idols of which Athens was full.

<sup>22</sup> The two letters were written from Corinth in 50-51.

<sup>23</sup> This account is rejected by those historians who regard the Acts with suspicion, e.g. Weiszaecker, *op. cit.*, p. 255; J. Weiss, *op. cit.*, pp. 181 *et seq.*, and 219. The discourse on the Areopagus has been especially attacked: cf. *infra*, p. 230, n. 29.

No doubt the Athenians of this time, influenced by their philosophers, possessed, not more religion, but more scepticism than other people: their roads, squares, and temples were full of statues. These were splendid works of art, but they were idols. It was of Athens that Petronius wrote: "Our land is so full of divinities that it is easier to meet a god than a man" <sup>24</sup> and Josephus, like Paul, calls the Athenians "the most devout of men." <sup>25</sup> On the great road called Hamaxitos, which linked the Piræus to Athens, there were at intervals altars "to the unknown gods" <sup>26</sup> and when, having gone through this long avenue, the Apostle entered Athens, he saw all around him or up on the Acropolis those monuments breathing beauty, the ruins of which still win our admiration, the Temple of Theseus, the Ceramicus, the Parthenon, and the Erechtheion. It is easy nowadays to see only the artistic splendour of these temples, which have long since ceased to be used for worship; but the Apostle saw in them idolatry, which is an abomination. "The idol is nothing," he himself will say to the Corinthians, "but the worship given to it is offered to devils, and not to God" (*I Cor.* viii, 4; x, 19-20). And his whole effort at Athens will be to turn the pagans away from idolatry and to lead them to Christ, and by Christ to God.

Amongst those whom he tried to convert, Luke mentions some Epicureans and Stoics (xvii, 18). These were, in fact, representatives of the two most widespread sects; always ready for something new (xvii, 21), they listened to this stranger. Some said contemptuously, "What is it that this word-sower would say?" Others, hearing him speak of Jesus and of the resurrection, said: "He is setting forth strange gods." <sup>27</sup> Drawn by this attraction of exotism, and finding the market place too noisy, they took him to the Areopagus. <sup>28</sup>

<sup>24</sup> *Satir.*, 17.

<sup>25</sup> *C. Ap.*, II, 12.

<sup>26</sup> On these dedications, cf. Deissmann, *Paulus*, pp. 226-9. It has often been remarked that this formula had a polytheistic sense, although the Apostle makes it the occasion of a monotheistic sermon. As Deissmann notes, he does not interpret it as a modern epigraphist would do, but tries to find in it a profound religious meaning, suggested to him by the line of the poet: "We are of his race."

<sup>27</sup> They saw in Jesus and the Anastasis, either seriously or in mockery, a new divine pair.

<sup>28</sup> St. John Chrysostom thinks that Paul was taken to a Court of Justice. Ramsay also sees a tribunal in the Areopagus (*The Bearing of Recent Discovery on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament*, London, 1915, pp. 103 *et seq.*) Many historians regard it as a local indication, and not the name of a tribunal. Cf. Wilkenhauser, *op. cit.*, pp. 351-3.

### *The Speech at the Areopagus*

Paul at once seized the opportunity given him. Standing in the midst of the Areopagus, he said:

"Ye men of Athens, I perceive that you are in all respects most religious. For passing through your city and noticing your sacred monuments, I saw an altar with this inscription: To an unknown god. What you adore without knowing, I come to preach to you.

"God, who made the world and all things therein, being Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands. Neither is he served with men's hands as though he needed anything, seeing it is he who giveth to all life and breath and all things, and hath made of one, all mankind, to dwell upon the whole face of the earth, determining appointed times, and the limits of their habitation, that they should seek God, if happily they may feel after him or find him, although he be not far from every one of us. For in him we live, and move, and are, as some of your own poets have said: 'For we are also his offspring.' Being therefore the offspring of God, we must not suppose the divinity to be like unto gold, or silver, or stone, the graving of art and device of man. And God, indeed, having winked at the times of this ignorance, now declareth unto men, that all should everywhere do penance. Because he hath appointed a day wherein he will judge the world in equity, by the man whom he hath appointed, giving faith to all by raising him up from the dead" (*Acts* xvii, 22-31).<sup>29</sup>

<sup>29</sup> The discourse of St. Paul at Athens is one of those which still to-day makes a very great impression on its readers. The remark is made by the historian who has most strongly attacked it: Norden, *Agnostos Theos*, Leipzig, 1913, p. 125. This impression, he thinks, is not justified by the personality of the orator, but by the force of the tradition expressed in this discourse. Norden, in fact, tries to show that this discourse is an artificial composition dominated by two influences: that of Jewish and Christian apologetic, nourished on recollections of the Old Testament, and that of the Stoic philosophy. All this is not only not Pauline, but is profoundly opposed to Paul's thought. To prove this, Norden (p. 130) contrasts with this discourse, *Romans* i, 18, and *Wisdom* xii, 27 *et seq.* Norden's thesis has been thoroughly refuted by Lagrange in *Review Biblique*, 1914, pp. 442, 448; Harnack, *Ist die Rede des Paulus in Athen ein ursprünglicher Bestandteil der Apostelgeschichte?* Leipzig, 1913, T.U., XXXIX, 1, and *Mission und Ausbreitung*, pp. 391 *et seq.*; Jacquier, *op. cit.*, pp. 271-81; Boudou, *op. cit.*, pp. 391-4. In particular, it must be pointed out that the chief themes of this discourse are not contradicted but confirmed by St. Paul (*Mission, l.c.*): Jesus and Anastasis, cf. *I Cor.* i; the natural knowledge of God, cf. *Rom.* i, 19; ii, 14. On the Judgment linked with the mention of God naturally known or unknown, cf. *Rom.* ii, 14, 16; on salvation by faith: iii, 31; this faith has as its object the resurrection of Christ. The only difference is in the responsibility for ignorance, strongly set forth in *Romans*, but implied also in the exhortation to the Athenians to come

When he spoke to the Jews, as at Antioch in Pisidia, for instance,<sup>30</sup> St. Paul dwelt on the memories of Israel, which were dear to them as to himself, at the same time stressing their Messianic import. Here similarly, after discreetly extolling the religion of the Athenians, he reminds them of the religious principles which their own philosophers and poets had recognised. Just as the Jews were happy in their traditions, so the Greeks delighted in their thinkers and artists. They willingly followed the Apostle as far as the threshold of Christianity, but there they halted, as generally did the Jews. The Judgment, and, above all, the resurrection of the dead, repelled them, or made them smile: some mocked, and others said: "We will hear thee again concerning this matter." "Some, adhering to him, did believe, among whom was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them."

Nowhere had the fruits of Paul's apostolic labours been so small: not only in the great cities, Antioch in Syria, Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Thessalonica, but in the humble townships, Lystra, Derbe, Philippi, Berea, numbers of believers had been grouped by Paul and organised into churches. At Athens there was nothing like that: a few generous souls gave themselves to him, but there was no question of founding a church. All this brilliant and sonorous group of orators and philosophers had seen him pass by, had heard him preach, and had dismissed him with an ironic smile. Paul himself has written a commentary on this scene in ineffaceable words:

"The word of the cross, to them indeed that perish, is foolishness, but to them that are saved, that is, to us, it is the power of God. For it is written: 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the prudence of the prudent I will reject.' Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputed of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world, by wisdom, knew not God, it hath pleased God, by the foolishness of our preaching, to save them that believe" (*I Cor. i, 18-21*).

In these few words we find the condemnation of the proud and blind wisdom of the Athenians, and the whole programme of the preaching of Paul at Corinth.

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out of this ignorance. On this point, moreover, Lagrange rightly says (*op. cit.*, p. 447): "One does not speak to people one wants to convert in the same way as to believers one wants to preserve from evil."

<sup>30</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 203.

*Corinth*

In the time of St. Paul, a traveller who went from Athens to Corinth had somewhat the impression which we have nowadays in going from Oxford to London. Instead of the university city in which life is wholly concentrated in its colleges, we find ourselves thrown into the feverish agitation of the city and its port. Athens was scarcely more than a university city, but it certainly retained all its ornamentation and all its pride; it had rejected the preaching of Paul, and for a long time it was to remain one of the most dangerous centres of pagan opposition to Christianity. Corinth was a cosmopolitan city; destroyed in 146 by Mummius, the town had been raised to a colony by Cæsar in 46 B.C. It was one of the chief centres of Mediterranean commerce.<sup>31</sup> But it was no longer a Greek town; the Italian colonists and their descendants were very numerous there, and the Orientals still more so; the inhabitants of Hellenic origin formed only a part of the population, and certainly were not the most numerous portion. At the same time, here, as in the rest of the Mediterranean world, Greek was the language of social relations and of business, and Hellenism covered all this variegated population with the mantle of its brilliant civilisation and of its easy life. The easy morality which was to be found in the whole of Hellenic paganism degenerated at Corinth into a licentiousness which had become proverbial, and which shocked the pagans themselves; it opposed to the preaching of the Gospel an obstacle which might well appear insurmountable, and which only the grace of God could conquer. The consultations by the first Christians of Corinth, and the replies of St. Paul, reveal the slough from which he had had to rescue them.<sup>32</sup>

When he entered this great city, so pagan, so busy, and so disolute, the Apostle was without the help of his usual collaborators,

<sup>31</sup> The western port, Lechaëum, linked to the city by long walls, was 12 stadia away from it; the eastern port, Cenchrae, was 70 stadia away. The citadel, Acrocorinthos, nearly 2,000 feet above the level of the sea, commanded the whole passage. In spite of a few attempts to pierce it, the isthmus always divided the two seas, but cargoes were transported, and light boats were drawn from one side to the other. This could not be done with big boats (*Acts xxvii*, 6, 37).

<sup>32</sup> Thus St. Paul had written to his faithful: "Do not keep company with fornicators." The Corinthians replied to him: "In that case we must leave this world." The Apostle had to explain to them that he was not forbidding all relations with these sinners, but that he forbade them to tolerate them in the church (*I Cor.* v, 9-11).

Silas and Timothy, who had remained in Macedonia. He was still feeling sad at the resistance shown by the Athenians towards the Gospel, and though not fearing for himself, he felt the weight of the responsibility which he was bearing. Later on he revived these memories when writing to the Corinthians:

"I, brethren, when I came to you, came not in loftiness of speech or of wisdom to declare unto you the testimony of Christ. For I decided myself not to know anything among you but Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not in the persuasive words of human wisdom, but in shewing of the Spirit and in power, that your faith might not stand on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God" (*I Cor.* ii, 1-5).

Certainly we have here the statement of a thesis dear to the Apostle, but there is also a memory of his past experience. When he made contact alone with these men of Corinth, so far removed from the Gospel, he realised the prestige exerted on them by rhetoric, human wisdom, and all those arts which he had decided not to employ there; his recent experience at Athens made this impression a very vivid one. The Corinthians for their part noticed his timidity, and later Paul's opponents brought it up against him.<sup>33</sup>

No one had ministered to his needs, and he owed his subsistence to the brethren of Macedonia (*II Cor.* xi, 8-9). True, he had regarded this independence as a point of honour, but at Philippi and Thessalonica he had not acted in that way; at Corinth itself he affirmed the right of the Apostles to be kept by the faithful (*I Cor.* ix, 6-27). But when he arrived in this great city, he could not vindicate this right in regard to people who were quite ignorant of Christianity, without rendering his preaching suspect in advance. Moreover, the sectional spirit which divided the church of Corinth imposed on him a special reserve in this matter; later he resolved not to encourage by his own example the pretensions of some interested preachers (*II Cor.* xi, 12).

When he arrived at Corinth, he joined himself to Aquila and Priscilla, who had come from Rome, which they had been obliged to leave in consequence of the edict of Claudius; they worked at the same trade as himself; he lodged with them, and worked with them. On the Sabbath, "he reasoned in the synagogue, and he

<sup>33</sup> *II Cor.* x, 1, 10; xi, 6; xiii, 3.



persuaded the Jews and the Greeks." When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, he redoubled his apostolic activity; the alms he received doubtless gave him more leisure, and the assistance of his two helpers enabled him to extend his efforts. The Jews could not bear this success: they opposed him, and reviled him. Then he shook his garments, and said: "Your blood be upon your own heads; I am innocent, and from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles." He was received in the house of a proselyte, Titius Justus, who lived near the synagogue; Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord, with all his house, and many Corinthians received baptism. One night the Lord said to Paul in a vision: "Do not fear, but speak, and hold not thy peace, for I am with thee, and no man shall set upon thee to hurt thee, for I have much people in this city." And he remained there a year and six months, continuing his preaching (*Acts xviii, 2-11*).

### *Preaching and Charisms*

Concerning this preaching, we have some brief but very valuable information in the letters to the Corinthians, whom St. Paul reminds, as we have said, that he had determined to know nothing amongst them but "Jesus Christ and him crucified." His Christians came for the most part from paganism (*I Cor. xii, 2*); they lived in surroundings thoroughly impregnated with pagan superstitions. To take them away from their past, and to safeguard them from contamination, he relied only on the preaching of Christ crucified:

"Seeing that . . . the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of our preaching, to save them that believe. For both the Jews require signs, and the Greeks seek after wisdom. But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews indeed a stumbling block, and unto the Gentiles foolishness, but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men" (*I Cor. i, 21-25*).

Later on (*I Cor. xv*) Paul reminds his converts of the tradition which he has transmitted to them: its chief articles are the death and resurrection of Christ; elsewhere (*xi, 23*) he repeats the account of the Last Supper which he had taught them; elsewhere again, he gives various words of the Lord concerning the union of husband and wife (*vii, 10*), the stipend of the teachers of the

Gospel (ix, 14). These are his weapons, by which he overthrows all reasoning against the knowledge of God, and subjects all minds to the obedience of Christ (*II Cor.* x, 4-6).

This preaching was upheld by the power of the Spirit, and it was this power that provided the foundation for the belief of the faithful (*II Cor.* ii, 4). The most evident work of this power was the transformation of men's souls:

"Do we need, as some do, epistles of commendation to you, or from you? You are our epistle, written in our hearts, which is known and read by all men. It is manifest that you are the epistle of Christ, ministered by us, and written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not in tables of stone, but in the fleshly tables of the heart" (*II Cor.* iii, 1-3).

In addition to this moral transformation, the charisms were still more evident: supernatural gifts, bestowed by the Holy Spirit upon Christians for the general edification, these had been poured out upon the church of Corinth with a truly divine profusion. These gifts should be a glory and a power for the whole Church, and they would be, if those who received them, remembering that they were members of Christ, made them serve only for the good of the body. That is the lesson which the Apostle gives them when he enumerates these charisms and determines their relative values:

"You are the body of Christ, and member of member. And God indeed hath set some in the church; first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly doctors, after that miracles, then the graces of healing, helps, governments, kinds of tongues, interpretations of speeches. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all doctors? Are all workers of miracles? Have all the grace of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But be zealous for the better gifts. And I shew unto you yet a more excellent way. If I speak with the tongues of men, and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. . . ." (*I Cor.* xii, 27-xiii, 1).<sup>34</sup>

<sup>34</sup> This teaching of St. Paul on the gradation of the charisms and the esteem in which one ought to hold them is completed by the rules given later on (ch. xiv) concerning their use. These chapters are of very great interest for the historian: they reveal the spiritual life of the Church of Corinth, filled with divine graces, but at the same time torn by divisions and saddened by scandals; they show above all the wisdom of the Apostle: the weaknesses of the Corinthians who were exalted by their charisms did not make him despise these gifts of God, but made him more anxious to verify their divine origin, regulate their use, and prevent their abuse. The above list can be completed by the other lists given by St. Paul: *I Cor.* xii, 8-10; *Rom.* xii, 6-8; *Ephes.* iv, 11. Cf. Prat, *Theology of St. Paul*, Vol. I, pp. 127-33.

*Conversions and Persecutions*

This preaching and these graces had borne their fruits: "Many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptised."<sup>35</sup> A small number alone are known to us;<sup>36</sup> the majority were of servile or lowly origin (*I Cor.* vi, 9-11); many had led before their conversion a very lax moral life (*I Cor.* vi, 9-11), and these vices would not be all abolished in one day; we find traces of them still in the church of Corinth. At the same time, these disappointments and even these scandals ought not to conceal from us the transformation of the majority of souls; the Corinthians became "rich in Christ" (*I Cor.* i, 5), and even when factions were ravaging it, the church of Corinth still remained the letter written by the hand of God.

St. Paul's success aroused the envy and hatred of the Jews. When Gallio arrived as proconsul for Achaia,<sup>37</sup> the Jews with one accord denounced Paul before his tribunal; the Apostle prepared to defend himself; Gallio stopped the argument:

"If it were some matter of injustice, or an heinous deed, O Jews, I should with reason bear with you. But if they be questions of word and names, and of your Law, look you to it: I will not be judge of such things" (*Acts* xviii, 14-15).

And he drove them from the judgment seat. They then laid hold of Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the tribunal, but Gallio cared for none of these things (*ibid.*, 16-17).

<sup>35</sup> *Acts* xviii, 8. St. Paul himself baptised only a small number of them: Crispus, Gaius, and the house of Stephanus (*I Cor.*, i, 14-16).

<sup>36</sup> Besides those who are named in the preceding note, we may mention Aquila and Priscilla, Chloe and her household (*I Cor.* i, 11), Phoebe who took the letter to the Romans (*Rom.* xvi, 1-2), Erastes (*ibid.*, 23), Tertius, Quartus, Fortunatus, and Achaicus.

<sup>37</sup> The date of this proconsulate has been fixed definitely by the inscription found at Delphi and published by E. Bourguet in his thesis *De rebus Delphicis imperatoriae aetatis capita duo*, Montepessulano, 1905, pp. 63 *et seq.* This inscription, much mutilated, contains a letter from the Emperor Claudius to the town of Delphi; this letter is dated by the tribunal power and the imperial acclamation; the figure of the tribunal power has disappeared, but the figure of the acclamation is extant, 26. This enables us to determine the date of the letter: between the end of 51 or more probably the beginning of 52, and August 1st, 52. Now according to the inscription, Gallio was already proconsul in Achaia; in all probability he remained in charge only a short while, a year at most, and perhaps only a few months. We infer that he took charge in the spring of 52. At that date Paul had spent eighteen months at Corinth (*Acts* xviii, 11); he had therefore arrived there in the last months of the year 50, and left there at the end of 52. Cf. Deissmann, *Paulus*, 1925, pp. 203-25; Hennequin, *Inscription de Delphes*, in *Supplément à Dict. de la Bible*, 355-73. These give bibliographies on the subject.

Paul remained a fairly long time at Corinth after this; then, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila, he left for Syria. At Cenchræ he shaved his head, because he had made a vow. At Ephesus, where his companions had decided to stop, he made only a short halt; he preached in the synagogue; the Jews pressed him to stay; he promised them to return, and left for Cæsarea; he went up from there to Jerusalem, saluted the church there, and went down once more to Antioch. There he spent some time, and then set out for a new voyage.<sup>38</sup>

Before we follow the Apostle into Anatolia and Asia Minor, we can pause a few moments with him at Antioch and consider the work already accomplished. The first mission had penetrated into the Hellenic and pagan world. How much had happened since the day when, at Cæsarea, in the house of Cornelius, Peter had cried: "In very deed I perceive that God is not a respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh justice is acceptable to him!" At that time a few men, chosen by God, entered into the Church; very soon the crowds of Antioch hastened in, and then, in the course of Paul's mission, the Church won not only Jews and proselytes, but also pagans whom no missionary had hitherto reached. The grain of mustard seed was becoming a great tree, and those who considered its rapid and strong growth were full of admiration and joy. And now, what Paul, Silas and Timothy had to relate was still more wonderful: the Gospel had penetrated amongst the Galatian tribes, and above all into that Hellenic world which Jewish propaganda had attacked but had never conquered. This was truly "the salvation which God had prepared before the face of all peoples, a light to the revelation of the gentiles, and the glory of Israel." But this canticle of Simeon was no longer a *Nunc dimittis*, but a hymn of victory.

#### § 4. THIRD MISSION (SPRING, A.D. 53 TO SUMMER, A.D. 57)

In the Spring, Paul set out once more, crossed again the steep and dangerous passes of the Taurus, then reached Galatia in the

<sup>38</sup> If it is desired to make more precise these indications in the Acts, we can say that Paul left Corinth in the autumn of 52. His mission had lasted three years; he visited Ephesus, Cæsarea and Jerusalem, then he stayed "some time" at Antioch. He probably passed the winter there, and in the spring of 53 set out for a third mission.

north-east, and went anew through the Galatian and Phrygian country, strengthening all the disciples in the faith. It was from there that, three years earlier, he had wanted to pass over into Asia; then the Spirit had turned him away towards Macedonia; now everything called him there, and following the path that so many conquerors had trod, he descended from the high plateaux of the interior, through Philadelphia and Sardis, towards the wealthy coasts of Asia. The Ephesians had extracted from him a promise to return to them; he kept his promise.

### *Ephesus*

Ephesus, the most opulent of the cities of Asia Minor, is now the most decayed; for many centuries its port has been silted up, and its ruined temples and houses have served as a quarry for the neighbouring Turks. But the excavations of the last twenty years have at last brought to light once more the plan of the double church, the library, the market place, the theatre, and the sacred way. From the little hill of Ayasolouk, we may contemplate this mass of ruins, and perceive in the marshy plain the sites of the old ports which mark the successive displacements of the shore receding towards the west. When St. Paul arrived there in 53, all this splendour, now in ruins, was at its highest.

Strong in the imperial protection, the old city surpassed its ancient rivals, Smyrna and Pergamus, and stood out as a capital city. It appeared then to Seneca as the great city of the Orient, similar to Alexandria.<sup>1</sup>

In this great metropolis, the oriental worship of Artemis was sovereign; but in the imperial epoch, the Roman cults, and above all those of Rome and of Augustus, were associated everywhere with the worship of the local divinities.

In the year 5 B.C., "Augustus installed right in the *temenos* a temple to Rome and the Emperor, destined for the meetings of the Κοινὸν Ἀσίας."<sup>2</sup> It was against these apparently all-powerful forces that St. Paul's preaching was going to be directed. It would also

<sup>1</sup> Ep. cii, 25: "Humanum animus . . . humilem non accipit patriam Ephesum aut Alexandriam, aut si quod est etiam nunc frequentius incolis, laetius tectis solum."

<sup>2</sup> C. Picard, *Éphèse*, p. 664.

encounter other obstacles: the jealousy of the Jews, and the sorcery which affected both Jews and pagans.<sup>3</sup>

### *Apollos*

When he went from Corinth to Cæsarea, Paul, as we have said, called at Ephesus and spoke to the Jews in the synagogue. This first contact had aroused a sympathetic curiosity; the Apostle had promised to return. Meanwhile, he had left at Ephesus his former Corinthian hosts, Aquila and Priscilla. In the course of the winter of the year 52-53, an eloquent and clever Alexandrian named Apollos preached in the synagogue. This man was full of zeal, but badly instructed, and knew only the baptism of John; nevertheless "he taught diligently the things that are of Jesus" (*Acts* xviii, 25), that is, no doubt, he set out to prove that Jesus was the Messiah. Aquila and Priscilla took him aside, taught him Christian doctrine, and as he wished to return to Achaia, they recommended him to the brethren. While Apollos was thus at Corinth, Paul arrived at Ephesus. There he found a group of about a dozen faithful. He conversed with them, and asked them whether they had received the Holy Ghost. They replied: "We have not so much as heard whether there be a Holy Ghost." Paul asked: "What baptism have you received, then?" "The baptism of John," was the reply. Paul thereupon instructed them, and as soon as they were baptised, they spoke in tongues and prophesied.

### *Preaching of St. Paul*

Paul then began the evangelisation of Ephesus. According to his custom, he frequented the synagogue; he preached there during three months; the Jews of Ephesus seem to have been less intolerant than those of Thessalonica. But many refused to believe, and in presence of the assembly, uttered imprecations against the Apostle's

<sup>3</sup> On the cults of Ephesus, and above all the cult of Artemis, the chief work is that of C. Picard, *Ephèse et Claros* (Paris, 1922). We do not follow him in the interpretation he gives of the narrative of the *Acts*, dating the arrival of St. Paul in 56 (p. 668), etc. The article by P. Antoine on *Ephèse* in the *Supplément* to the *Dict. de la Bible* may usefully be consulted. Cf. R. Tonneau, *Ephèse au temps de S. Paul*, in *Revue Biblique*, 1929, pp. 5-34 and 321-63.

doctrine. Paul thereupon left the synagogue, taking with him his disciples; each day he taught in the school of Tyrannus.<sup>4</sup> This daily teaching continued for two years, "so that all they who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Gentiles" (*Acts* xix, 10). In the first letter to the Corinthians, written during this evangelisation of Ephesus, Paul wrote: "I see a great door opened before me, and many adversaries" (xvi, 9). That is certainly the picture presented to us by the reading of the account in the *Acts*. In this great city, the gateway of Asia, during these two years it was not only the citizens of Ephesus who were able to hear each day the teaching of Paul, but all the strangers who passed through the city or stayed there, coming from Rome, Egypt, Syria or Asia, heard the doctrine in their turn. Several doubtless opposed it, but many accepted it, as the riot of the silversmiths soon showed.

### *Miracles*

God, moreover, confirmed this activity of the Apostle by miracles: "There were brought from his body to the sick, handkerchiefs and aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the wicked spirits went out of them" (*Acts* xix, 12). This domination over devils became so well known that Jewish exorcists had recourse to it: the seven sons of a Jewish chief priest named Skeuas exorcised thus: "I conjure you by Jesus, whom Paul preacheth." "Jesus I know," replied the spirit, "and Paul I know, but who are you?" And the possessed man throwing himself upon them knocked down two, who had to take flight, naked and covered with wounds. All the inhabitants of Ephesus, Jews and Greeks, heard of this; all were in consequence in great fear, and the name of the Lord Jesus was glorified. Many believers abandoned their superstitious practices; they brought their books and burnt them. Their value was estimated at fifty thousand pieces of silver. This last fact shows the attraction exercised on the Ephesians by magical books and practices. When the Spirit breathed, all these poisonous mists were

<sup>4</sup>The Western text adds: "from the fifth to the tenth hour," that is, at the equinox, from 11 o'clock to 4 o'clock; in the summer later, in the winter earlier. This timing is quite probable: teaching was given late in the morning (Lake recalls Martial, IX, 68; XII, 57; Juvenal, VII, 222 *et seq.*). The fifth hour marked the end of work (Martial, IV, 8). Paul could then make use of the place, and having spent the morning in working at his trade, pass the warm hours of the afternoon in teaching doctrine.

dissipated; but we must not be surprised to find them later on infecting Asia anew, and spreading Gnosticism there.

### *Apostolic Labours*

This daily preaching, these miracles, and these great victories do not completely reveal to us the apostolate of St. Paul, or the secret of his power; he won disciples, attached them to Christ, brought them forth, by the Spirit, to a new life, and this less by his general activity than by his conversations, his visits, and his truly fatherly affection. Later, when passing through Miletus, he will remind the Ephesians of this period, so full of devotion:

"You know from the first day that I came into Asia, in what manner I have been with you, for all the time, serving the Lord with all humility and with tears, and temptations which befell me by the conspiracies of the Jews; how I have kept back nothing that was profitable to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, testifying both to Jews and Gentiles penance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . Therefore watch, keeping in memory that for three years I ceased not, with tears to admonish every one of you night and day (*Acts* xx, 18-21, 31).

And while he was still at Ephesus he wrote thus to the Corinthians:

"Even unto this hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no fixed abode, and we labour, working with our own hands; we are reviled, and we bless; we are persecuted, and we suffer it; we are blasphemed, and we entreat; we are made as the refuse of this world, the offscourings of all, even until now" (*I Cor.* iv, 11-13).

These warm words make us feel still the heat of these years of combat and of suffering; they bring home to us what were his days of labour; the mornings, devoted to work of his trade; the warm hours of the afternoon to preaching, the evenings to personal interviews, and all the while, so many snares, insults, persecutions, and amongst even the converts, such weakness and inconstancy.

The Ephesians were not the only ones that he had to uphold and correct: the Apostle felt himself weighed down by "the care of all the churches" (*II Cor.* xii, 28). It was during and after his stay at Ephesus that Paul wrote his two letters to the Corinthians; no



other document reveals to us more the weight of this solicitude, and the pain which sometimes accompanied it.

### *First Letter to the Corinthians*

Paul had received bad news from Corinth through the household of Chloe.<sup>5</sup> Not being able to leave Asia, he had sent Timothy to Corinth (*I Cor.* iv, 17; xvi, 10). Later there arrived Stephanus, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, bearers of better news, which relieved the Apostle's mind (xvi, 17). Thereupon he wrote the first letter to the Corinthians. We find in it an authority certain of itself, but anxious to correct the abuses which had been reported.

### *The Divisions in Corinth*

The first of these abuses was the division of the Corinthians into parties: "It hath been signified unto me of you, by them that are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you . . . that every one of you saith: 'I indeed am of Paul,' and 'I am of Apollo,' and 'I of Cephas,' and 'I of Christ.' Is Christ divided?" (i, 11-13).

These divisions were doubtless not absolute schisms: all the faithful celebrated the Eucharist together; all recognised the authority of the Apostle; but they were so many parties, after the manner of the Greeks, who delighted to claim to belong to one particular master, and to set him up against others. That these oppositions and preferences were the origin of disagreements which imperilled the charity and union of hearts was evident in the commencement of the Church, and how often shall we find the same in its subsequent history! <sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> *I Cor.* i, 11. Before this first Epistle Paul had written to the Corinthians a letter which we do not possess; therein he had recommended them not to keep company with evil doers (*I Cor.* v, 9). His instructions had not been properly understood, and he had to return to this question of immorality and also to that of offerings made to idols; these two points were the ones in the Apostolic decree which could give rise to most difficulties. Lietzmann, in his commentary (note on v, 9), thinks that the decree had been taken to Corinth by St. Peter: this is a mere hypothesis: Paul might himself have communicated this decree to the Corinthians.

<sup>6</sup> Without seeking for other examples, it will suffice to mention the dissensions which forty years later divided once more the Church of Corinth, and which the Bishop of Rome, St. Clement, had to pacify. Cf. Bk. II.

On this occasion, the weakness of the disciples was all the more manifest inasmuch as the masters whom they thus set one against the other had not desired any such opposition. We know how Apollos, then a catechumen, had come to Ephesus, had there been more completely instructed by Aquila and Priscilla, and recommended by them to the faithful at Corinth. He had preached in that city with much fruit, then he had gone to rejoin St. Paul at Ephesus, and he was there when the Apostle wrote his Epistle (xvi, 12). He had done nothing to form a party: Paul himself wanted to send him again to Corinth, but he could not persuade him to go (*ibid.*). The Apostle, moreover, willingly acknowledged the good work which this preacher had accomplished: "I have planted, Apollo watered, but God gave the increase . . ." (iii, 6). But his preaching, more cultured and more elegant than that of Paul, had fascinated some fashionable listeners, who delighted in the speculations of Apollos and in his interpretations of Scripture, and thus in spite of himself he found himself the head of a school. Others invoked the authority of Cephas. To explain this it would suffice to recall the fact that Peter was recognised as the head of the Apostles, and that those who contested the apostolic authority of St. Paul delighted to set St. Peter against him; but it would seem also that St. Peter had personally visited Corinth;<sup>7</sup> those who had come under his influence may have exploited it against St. Paul, just as others made similar use of Apollos.

These three groups, which appealed to Paul, Cephas, Apollos, are recalled later on by St. Clement (xlvii, 3). To them must be added the fourth party, those who said: "I am of Christ."<sup>8</sup> This group was doubtless analogous to that of the Judaisers, who went from Jerusalem to Antioch and intimidated Peter himself, boasting of James, the brother of the Lord, as of the holder of a purer tradition. For the rest, there is no trace here of any propaganda in favour of circumcision or of Jewish observances, but merely a rivalry

<sup>7</sup> Dionysius of Corinth attests this visit: "Rome and Corinth are the two trees planted by Peter and Paul, for both planted in our Corinth, and instructed us; and after teaching together in Italy, they suffered martyrdom at the same time" (Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, II, 25, 8).

<sup>8</sup> Some exegetes think that "I am of Christ" is a comment by Paul, and that there was no fourth party. The construction of the phrase suggests the contrary interpretation: the four members are parallel, and depend equally on "one saith . . ." Cf. the note by Lietzmann on I. 12; this interpretation is confirmed by II. Cor. x, 7. Cf. Prat, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 89-91.

directed against Paul, and attempts to lessen his authority.<sup>9</sup>

All these parties divided and weakened the Corinthian church; yet they did not shake the authority of St. Paul, or the attachment of the Corinthians to him. We feel this in the assurance of his reply, and also in the affection which he expresses and which he expects: "I write not these things to confound you, but I admonish you as my dearest children. For if you have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet not many fathers. For in Christ Jesus, by the gospel I have begotten you" (iv, 14-15). What he urges upon them over and over again is the superiority of the power of the Spirit over the words of human wisdom, and in this he is not attacking Apollos, but the weaknesses of the Greek mentality, and its empty infatuation. A last word affirms the authority of the Apostle and sums up his teaching:

"Some among you are puffed up. But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them that are puffed up, but the power. For the kingdom of God is not in speech, but in power. What will you? Shall I come to you with a rod; or in charity, and in the spirit of meekness?" (iv., 18-21).

### *Immorality and Injustice*

While pride exalts the Corinthians, immorality stains them, and yet they tolerate this:

"It is absolutely heard, that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as the like is not among the heathens, that one should have his father's wife. And you are puffed up; and have not rather mourned, that he might be taken away from among you that hath done this deed. I indeed, absent in body, but present in spirit, have already judged, as though I were present, him that hath so done, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, you being gathered together with my spirit, by the power of our Lord Jesus, to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>10</sup>

Already the Apostle had instructed the Corinthians to avoid all

<sup>9</sup> Juelicher, *Einleitung*, p. 82, sees in those "of Christ" some Christians who claimed to be taught immediately by Christ and not by men. The words of Paul (xi, 1), "Be ye imitators of me, as I am of Christ," would be aimed at these. This is not very likely. Lietzmann nevertheless follows Juelicher in this interpretation of i. 12 (p. 7).

<sup>10</sup> v, 1-5. On this scandal, and the Apostle's condemnation of it, cf. Prat, *Theology of St. Paul*, Vol. I, pp. 99-102.

contact with impure people. They had not understood this, or pretended not to understand it: "we should have to leave this world," they said. St. Paul pointed out that he had not meant that: we are not the judges of sinners outside the Church; God will judge them. But the sinner within the Church must not be tolerated: "put away the evil one from among yourselves." He therefore excommunicates the incestuous man, and is ready to deliver him to Satan, as he will do later with Hymeneus and Alexander, "that they may learn not to blaspheme" (I *Tim.* I, 20). Then St. Paul deals with those who, on the basis of contempt for the body, think that all things are permissible: "The body is not for fornication," he says, "but for the Lord" (vi, 13).

These grave warnings enable us to judge how dangerous the old leaven of immorality, so prevalent in Corinth, still was to the new converts; but we must call attention above all to the high and noble thoughts which Paul suggests to men's minds to counter the danger: "Shall I take the members of Christ and make them the members of an harlot? . . . Know you not that your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost? . . . and that you are not your own?" (vi, 15, 19). These exhortations presuppose and nourish a truly Christian faith.

Another abuse is denounced and condemned: "Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to be judged before the unjust, and not before the saints? . . . Is it so that there is not among you any one wise man that is able to judge between his brethren? But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before unbelievers!" And recalling the Gospel morality, he insists: "Why do you not rather suffer wrong? Why do you not rather allow yourselves to be defrauded?" (vi, 1-7).

After these rebukes, inspired by such absolute faith and expressed so strongly, St. Paul deals with questions which had been submitted to him. This second part of the letter is, like the first, of the highest interest, for it makes known to us the life of the Corinthian community in all its aspects, and the direction which the Apostle wishes it to take.

### *Marriage and Virginity*

Is it good to marry? That is the first question put to the Apostle. In this city, stained by so much immorality, there were also teachers

who forbade marriage. These two exaggerated moral tendencies will manifest themselves also amongst the Gnostics. St. Paul rejects both. He has condemned fornication, he defends the sanctity of marriage; but he shows, to those souls who desire to seek God only, an ideal which is higher than marriage, namely, that of virginity:

"He that is without a wife, is solicitous for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please God. But he that is with a wife, is solicitous for the things of the world, how he may please his wife, and he is divided. And the unmarried woman and the virgin thinketh on the things of the Lord, that she may be holy in body and in spirit. But she that is married thinketh on the things of the world, how she may please her husband. And this I speak for your profit, not to cast a snare upon you, but for that which is decent, and which may give you power to attend upon the Lord without impediment."<sup>11</sup>

### *Idol Offerings*

St. Paul next settles the cases of conscience which arose in a pagan city from the custom of offering food to idols, and participating in religious repasts. The idol is nothing, but one must avoid scandal. In the market one can eat food without anxiety as to its origin; one can eat if invited to a meal by an unbeliever; but "if any man say: 'This has been sacrificed to idols,' do not eat of it, for his sake that told it, and for conscience' sake" (x, 28). In the case of the religious repasts of the pagans, a greater strictness is necessary; to take part therein would be to participate in an idolatrous worship, and that could not be allowed: "You cannot drink the chalice of the Lord, and the chalice of devils: you cannot be partakers of the table of the Lord, and of the table of devils" (x, 21).

### *The Eucharist*

Christians have themselves their own sacrificial banquet, the Supper of the Lord: "The chalice of benediction which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? And the bread which we break, is it not the partaking of the body of the Lord?" (x, 16). Christians cannot take part in any other sacred meal;

<sup>11</sup> vii, 32-5. This great preoccupation, to serve God without impediment, is still more urgent if we remember that "the time is short," and that "the fashion of this world passeth away" (vii, 29, 31).

their worship is exclusive, like their faith; they have but one God and one Lord. To the celebration of this Supper, the Corinthians did not always bring the respect which they ought, or proper preparation; the meal was taken not all together, but in little groups, without waiting, and without putting together what each had brought, and this had led to excesses: "One is hungry, and another is drunk." It is likely that in this matter again, pagan and Jewish customs<sup>12</sup> had made their influence felt; people naturally copied the religious repasts to which they had been accustomed. In addition, some did not hesitate to communicate in the body and blood of the Lord though unworthy of it; the Apostle points out to them the gravity of this fault:

Whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord. But let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of the chalice. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord" (xi, 27-29).

To explain the significance of such grave warnings, Paul repeats to his Christians the account of the Supper and its meaning. We shall have occasion later on<sup>13</sup> to quote these texts, which throw so strong a light on the faith of the Apostolic Church in the eucharistic mystery. St. Paul goes on to speak of charisms, of which he regulates the esteem and the use,<sup>14</sup> then he speaks of the resurrection of the body, which some Christians at Corinth rejected;<sup>15</sup> against this negation the Apostle protests with all his authority:

"If there be no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen again. And if Christ be not risen again, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain, Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God" (xv, 13-15).

<sup>12</sup> Cf. the description of the Paschal meal in the *Mishna*, *Pesachim*, X (ed. Beer, pp. 186 *et seq.*): ". . . After the paschal meal there is the *aphiqomen*. If some have fallen asleep, the others can still eat; if all are asleep, they cannot." Beer notes: "This sleep may be caused by wine. If some are asleep, the others at least save the honour of the evening." Cf. *Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ*, Vol. II, p. 217.

<sup>13</sup> Bk. II.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. above, p. 234.

<sup>15</sup> This reluctance to admit the resurrection is much more understandable in Gentile converts than in Christians coming from Judaism. This feature thus confirms what we gather from others, the origin of the neophytes.

On this occasion Paul repeats all the traditional catechesis concerning the death of Christ, his burial, resurrection, and appearances (xv, 1-11). This witness is of the greatest value to us; once more the early disciples, by their resistance to the faith, have called forth attestations which enlighten us in turn.

### *Christian Life in Corinth*

This Epistle is valuable to us not only because of the doctrines which it affirms, but also because of the Christian life which it reveals. We learn a great deal about these Corinthians, upon whom God has showered such gifts, who are so beloved by the Apostle, and yet are still so carnal (iii, 2), and so unmanageable. The charisms have been communicated abundantly to the church of Corinth: people speak there in tongues, perform miracles, and prophesy, and yet they get drunk at the Supper: it seems more difficult for God to make saints than to make wonder-workers.

This enables us to understand better, and to judge more fairly, the suspicions which could arise amongst the Judeo-Christians in respect to these first Gentile churches;<sup>16</sup> accustomed from infancy to a severe morality, and also to despise pagans, the Hebrews would be tempted to judge severely these "sinners coming from paganism" (*Gal.* ii, 15). This infirmity of the flesh, so manifest still amongst the Corinthians in the year 55, should become less; these stains must be purified; the Corinthians are still only children in Christ, and carnal; the Apostle cannot give them meat, but only milk (iii, 1-3). This Epistle has often been compared with the letter to the Ephesians<sup>17</sup> or again with the first Epistle of St. Peter,<sup>18</sup> in order to show the progress in the moral training of Christians, and consequently, in the preaching of Christianity.

The more we consider the weakness of these little children in Christ, the more we admire the Apostle's educational method. He is patient and knows how to forgive, but from the first day he is intransigent. Christian morality is inflexible, just as the rule of

<sup>16</sup> Cf. W. L. Knox, *St. Paul and the Church of Jerusalem*, Cambridge, 1925, p. 286 and n. 14; p. 312 and n. 12 *et seq.*

<sup>17</sup> This comparison was especially familiar to Origen, who delights to see in the Corinthians carnal Christians, and in the Ephesians, the perfect. Cf. *Recherches de Science Religieuse*, 1922, p. 279, n. 1.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Knox, *op. cit.*, p. 293, n. 14.

faith: to those who allow themselves still to be led by their pagan relatives to participate in the religious repasts which they previously attended, Paul opposes a categorical "No." "You cannot be partakers of the table of the Lord and of the table of devils." Similarly, in the case of those who deny the resurrection: if this is denied, "our preaching is vain, and your faith is vain." And again: "If Christ be not risen again, your faith is vain, for you are yet in your sins." And together with its intransigence, we note the absolute authority of this faith: it is sovereign, and judges everything. Whatever be the question which is submitted to him, Paul in order to settle it invokes the highest principles of Christianity. To the degrading vices which the Corinthians have before their eyes and which they know from experience, he opposes, not indeed the care of health, nor even respect for human dignity, but the Christian faith: "You are the members of Christ, and the temples of the Holy Ghost."

It is also by the same principles of faith that he decides all the other questions put to him, whether these are concerned with offerings to idols, or legal proceedings, or marriage, or the Supper, or the resurrection. All this brings home to us the exalted level of the Apostle's thought, to which he would lift up by the grace of the Holy Spirit even such children in the faith, such carnal people as the Corinthians. It was in this way that he made Christians of all his disciples.

Yet this great effort did not immediately win all hearts: Timothy, returning from Corinth to Ephesus, brought back bad news; the Epistle had not succeeded in ending the oppositions of the parties or in reforming morals, and Timothy had also failed. Paul then decided, doubtless about the summer of 55, to return personally to Corinth; he himself encountered a resistance which he could not overcome. He went back to Ephesus, grievously hurt by this check. He at once wrote to the Corinthians a letter which is severe, and full of sadness (*II Cor.* ii, 4); then he sent Titus to Corinth, either as bearer of the letter, or more probably to ascertain the effect which it produced.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> The succession of events as set forth here is only a probable conjecture; the journey of Paul from Ephesus to Corinth seems to be attested by *II Cor.* xiii, 1-2; cf. xii, 14; the letter between *I Cor.* and *II Cor.* is similarly referred to (*II Cor.* ii, 4; vii, 12). Cf. Juelicher, *Einleitung zum N.T.*, pp. 89-95; Leitzmann, note on *II Cor.* ii, 4; Meinertz in *Theol. Revue*, 1923, pp. 266-8. In a contrary sense, see E. Golla, *Zwischenreise und Zwischenbrief*, 1922.



*The Riot at Ephesus*

This letter was written most likely in the autumn of 55. Paul then thought he would continue his work at Ephesus until the Pentecost of the year 56. In April and May<sup>20</sup> the great festivals of Artemis would bring to the city crowds of pilgrims and sightseers; the preaching of the Gospel might reach them, and spread by their means through the whole of Asia.

The festival was held, but it was the occasion of a riot which imperilled Paul's life. A silversmith named Demetrius complained that his trade was being injured by the Apostle; the little votive temples in honour of Artemis had brought him and his workmen great profit, but "this Paul by persuasion hath drawn away a great multitude, not only of Ephesus, but almost of all Asia, saying 'They are not gods which are made by hands.' So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought, but also the temple of great Diana shall be reputed for nothing; yea, and her majesty shall begin to be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worship-peth" (*Acts* xix, 25-27). Demetrius aroused the jewellers by thus haranguing them; they went round the city crying: "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" The whole city was moved; they rushed into the theatre, taking with them two companions of Paul, Gaius and Aristarchus. Paul wanted to go there, but he was prevented. A Jew named Alexander tried to speak, probably in order to clear his race, but as soon as it was known that a Jew was speaking, the tumult redoubled. Eventually the town clerk made himself heard: for private matters there are the tribunals; for public matters a lawful assembly could be convoked; but this tumultuous meeting must be dissolved: "we are in danger of being accused of sedition."

"The scene described here," says Reuss in his Commentary on this passage, "is perhaps the most picturesque in the whole book; it has in such a high degree the *cachet* of psychological truth that it is clearly in each line the writing of an eye-witness." But if it merits attention, it is above all because it reveals to us the apostolic activity of Paul and its fruitfulness; when the Apostle had passed

<sup>20</sup> In the time of St. Paul, the most solemn feast, that of the birthday of the goddess, was celebrated on the 6 Thargelion (roughly, May). In 160 it was put back to the month of Artemision, in which the Panegyrics were already celebrated. Cf. Picard, *Ephèse et Claros*, pp. 323 *et seq.* This inscription of 160 will be found in the *Sylloge* of Dittenberger, p. 867. Cf. *Beginnings*, Vol. V, p. 255.

through Ephesus the first time in 52, he had found no Christians there (*Romans* xvi, 5); when he returned there the following year, he had met, besides Aquila and Priscilla, a dozen half-converted people; at the end of two or three years the progress of Christianity had been so rapid that the makers of idols felt their business threatened.<sup>21</sup> The friendly intervention of the Asiarchs (xix, 31) shows that Paul had won some of these high officials of Ephesus,<sup>22</sup> if not as believers, at least as friends.

So rapid and so extensive a penetration of Christianity was bound to lead to opposition; at Ephesus, as elsewhere, the Jews were against the Apostle, and had laid traps for him (*Acts* xx, 29); they found in the pagan multitude, with its interests, and above all with its passions, accomplices quite ready for a fight. From the year 55 Paul felt himself so endangered that he wrote to the Corinthians in his first letter: "If the dead rise not, why are we in danger every hour? Yea, by that glorifying in you, brethren, which is mine in Christ Jesus our Lord, day by day am I meeting death. If according to man I have fought with wild beasts at Ephesus, what doth it profit me? If the dead rise not again, 'let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.'"<sup>23</sup>

We have no further information about this first crisis: most probably it was not then dispelled, but merely lessened; the commotion made by Demetrius once more aroused men's hate, and put the Apostle in great danger. A few weeks later, he wrote thus to the Corinthians:

<sup>21</sup> Some sixty years later, the letter of Pliny to Trajan will display a similar anxiety: Christian propaganda was so effective in Bithynia that those who sold animals destined for the sacrifices found it difficult to meet with purchasers: *Epist.* x, 97. The Ephesian decree of the year 160 shows that the cult of Artemis was much endangered.

<sup>22</sup> The Asiarch was the high priest of the worship of Rome and Augustus, and the President of the Provincial Assembly; he was elected for one year, but retained his title during his lifetime. Cf. Chapot, *op. cit.*, pp. 468-89; Guiraud, *Les assemblées provinciales*, pp. 97-106.

<sup>23</sup> *I Cor.* xv, 30-2. Starting from this text, the *Acts of Paul* relate that the Apostle had been condemned to the beasts at Ephesus. This account was published in 1936 from a papyrus. The tradition is reproduced in a Marcionite prologue to *Colossians*, Hippolytus *In Daniele*, iii, 29, and afterwards in Nicephorus Callistus, *H.E.*, II, 25 (P.G., CXLV, 821); cf. Vouaux, *Actes de Paul*, p. 25. This literal interpretation is generally and rightly abandoned: if Paul had been condemned to the beasts, he would thereby have lost his freedom and his rights as a Roman citizen (*Digeste*, XXVIII, 1, 8, 4). On all this, cf. in *Revue Biblique*, 1919, pp. 404-18; J. Lebreton, in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, 1937, pp. 468-70.

"We would not have you ignorant, brethren, of our tribulation which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure above our strength, so that we were weary even of life. We had in ourselves the sentence of death, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raiseth the dead" (*II Cor.* i, 8-9).

### *The Departure from Ephesus*

Once more St. Paul had to bow to the storm: he left Ephesus,<sup>24</sup> as he had left Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Corinth; in the eyes of his foes he appeared to be a fugitive, but he was rather an indefatigable missionary who, leaving behind him established churches, went forth to found new ones. At the same time, it must be said that this church of Ephesus in which the Apostle had made the longest stay of all, disappeared henceforth from his history; the epistles to the Thessalonians, Philippians, and Corinthians bear witness to the vigilant authority which St. Paul continued to exercise over his disciples; but there is no epistle extant which reveals the same relations towards the Ephesians.<sup>25</sup> A few months after

<sup>24</sup> Several historians have thought that Paul was imprisoned at Ephesus, and that it was from there that he wrote the Epistles of the Captivity; see in this sense W. Michaelis, *Pastoralbriefe und Gefangenschaftsbriefe*, Gütersloh, 1930; Michaelis thinks that this hypothesis enables him to group together all the Epistles of Paul except the Pastorals, and that the former were all written in 54-5, so that there is no reason to speak of a development in Pauline thought. On the other hand, there would be a long interval between *Philippians* and the Pastoral Epistles, which would make their Pauline authorship more likely. These arguments are not convincing: there is no reason why we should not admit a progressive evolution of Paul's thought; and as to the Pastoral Epistles, the difference in circumstances suffices to explain the development of institutions. Finally, it would be very difficult to understand why the Apostle should have written so much during the years 54-5, and then remained silent during the whole of the remainder of his life. Cf. Juelicher, *Einleitung*, pp. 43-4, and the monograph of J. Schmid quoted above. The study of the Epistles of the Captivity provides no solid argument for this hypothesis, and many considerations are against it: Paul's silence in his discourse at Miletus, in *II Cor.*, and the silence of Luke: he was at Philippi, apparently, when Paul was at Ephesus, and when it is supposed that he wrote to the Philippians.

<sup>25</sup> We have a letter of Paul "to the Ephesians," but this ascription is not primitive: cf. J. Schmid, *Der Epheserbrief des Apostels Paulus*, Freiburg, 1928, pp. 37-129: "The community of the metropolis of Asia cannot in any case be the (sole) destination of the letter" (p. 46); and there is nothing in the letter itself which particularly concerns the Ephesians. Several exegetes have thought that there is in the Epistle to the Romans (*Rom.* xvi, 3-16) a note addressed to the Christians of Ephesus: thus Renan, *op. cit.*, pp. lxx-lxxix; Reuss, *Romains*, pp. 19-20; Weiszaecker, *op. cit.*, pp. 331 *et seq.*; Feine, *Die Abfassung des Philip-*

his departure from Ephesus, when Paul went up to Jerusalem, he summoned the presbyters of Ephesus to Miletus; the discourse which he made to them manifests the deep affection which he had for them and they for him;<sup>26</sup> but it was a discourse of farewell. Very soon John was to come to Ephesus, and the churches of Asia would pass to his sphere of action. At the end of the first century, and also in the next, the Corinthians were still the disciples of Paul, whereas Ephesus was, above all, the city of John.<sup>27</sup>

## § 5. THE JOURNEY TOWARDS JERUSALEM

### *Paul in Macedonia*

"When we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we suffered all tribulation; combats without, fears within" (*II Cor.* vii, 5).

The days which followed the departure from Ephesus were for St. Paul days of great anxiety: he was obliged to abandon, after many combats and trials, this church which he had founded with such difficulty, and to which he had devoted himself night and day for three years; also he was troubled about the Church of Corinth, which was also so dear to him, and which had caused him so much pain. Had it been won back by his letter? He did not know yet. He went first of all to Troas to preach; there also, as just before at Ephesus, a promising prospect opened out before him; but Titus, whom he had hoped to find with a message from Corinth,

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*perbriefes in Ephesus mit einer Anlage über Rom.*, xvi, 3-20, als *Epheserbrief*, Gütersloh. As an argument in favour, there is brought forward the personal relations which this note shows between Paul and twenty-six named Christians: how, it is asked, would he know so many in a church which he had never visited? It is added that Aquila, Priscilla, Epenetes are names of Christians in Ephesus. Sanday (*Romans*, pp. xcii-xcv and 421) replies that it is not surprising that Paul should know twenty-six people in Rome, and that he names them the more willingly because he was unknown to the Church of Rome as a whole. As for the three "Ephesians," it must be remembered that Aquila and Priscilla had previously lived in Rome. There remains Epenetes, "the first-fruits of Asia"; but that is certainly too slender a basis upon which to build the hypothesis of a note to the Ephesians.

<sup>26</sup> From the fact that Paul did not go to Ephesus in the course of this journey one must not infer (with Weiszaecker, *op. cit.*, p. 310) that the Church of Ephesus was estranged from him. The explanation of Luke (*Acts* xx, 16) is sufficient: Paul was anxious to get to Jerusalem.

<sup>27</sup> To-day the neighbouring hill still bears the name Ayasoluk. Cf. *infra*, ch. V, § 2.

was not there. He could not rest, and set out to meet him in Macedonia (*ibid.* ii, 12-13). There at last God comforted him: "God, who comforteth the humble, comforted us by the coming of Titus, and not by his coming only, but also by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, relating to us your desire, your mourning, your zeal for me" (vii, 6-7).

Never had Paul felt so deeply the "care of all the churches," his sorrows and his joys; and it is this poignant emotion which gives to this second letter to the Corinthians its pathetic tone; we do not find there the great doctrinal controversies which fill, for example, the epistle to the Romans; but nowhere else does the personality of the Apostle appear in so warm a light.

### *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*

To understand the nature and bearing of the conflict, we must realise the opposition which had for so long been raised against him at Corinth. If we compare the opponents whom St. Paul combats in his letters to the Corinthians with those whom he refutes in the Epistle to the Galatians, the difference is manifest: we have here no anti-Judaising doctrinal polemics; the attacks which Paul has to repel seem to concern less his doctrine than his person. At the same time, it is clear that these attacks originated in Judaising circles. The replies of the Apostle are directed there: "They are Hebrews? So am I. They are Israelites? So am I. They are the seed of Abraham? So am I. They are the ministers of Christ? . . . I am more" (xi, 22-23). These last words give us to understand that these people boasted of Christ. Again, we read: "If any man trust to himself that he is Christ's, let him think this again with himself, that as he is Christ's, so are we also" (x, 7; *of.* v, 16). In all this we recognise most probably these "of Christ" mentioned in the first letter. In the interval they had, apparently, been supported and encouraged by an agitator from elsewhere; mention is made of this individual (x, 10); and of others also (x, 12; xi, 4). These intruders had produced letters of recommendation (iii, 1). From whom were these letters? We cannot answer this with certainty, but it is likely that these intruders had sought to claim authority from the "great Apostles,"<sup>1</sup> as had been done by the Judaisers of Antioch and Galatia. They were false apostles, deceitful workmen, ministers of

<sup>1</sup> Ch. xi, 5; xii, 11.

Satan (xi, 13-15). Such grave accusations show certainly that it was not a matter of rival personalities, but indeed, as Paul says (xi, 4), of another Christ, another Holy Ghost, another Gospel.<sup>2</sup>

To press home their attacks more effectively, these intriguers did their best to discredit the Apostle: he was inconstant, and irresolute (i, 17), domineering,<sup>3</sup> a liar (xi, 31); he was accused of writing threatening letters, while weak in bodily presence, and not knowing what to say (x, 10); he was foolish (xi, 16), a deceiver (xii, 16-18); if he declined the support of his faithful, it was because he knew he had no right to it.<sup>4</sup>

### *The Apostle's Defence*

This bitter opposition compelled Paul to defend himself; it called forth some of the strongest passages in the New Testament; and inasmuch as the Apostle's person was most directly involved, he appears in full relief in the brilliant light of the combat: the whole Paul is there, with his labours, his sufferings, and also his revelations. It is with reluctance that he makes known these secrets; this reserve itself shows us that they were for him the most precious treasures, but also graces which it was dangerous to publish, and which the soul ought to guard jealously as a secret between itself and God:

"If I must glory (it is not expedient indeed), I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I know a man in Christ who about fourteen years ago (whether in the body I know not or out of the body I know not, God knoweth), was caught up to the third heaven, and I know

<sup>2</sup> When Paul was faced by jealousies and personal animosities, his attitude was quite different; thus *Phil.* i, 15-21, speaking of those who preach Christ through envy and in a spirit of contention: "Whether by occasion, or by truth, Christ is preached, in this I rejoice, yea, and will rejoice."

<sup>3</sup> i, 23; cf. x, 8; xiii, 10.

<sup>4</sup> xii, 11-18; cf. vii, 2. All this polemic is set forth in the first seven chapters of the letter and the four last (x-xiii), chapters viii-ix being devoted to the question of the collection. Between the first part and the last we notice a difference in tone: in chapters i-vii, Paul displays a trustful affection towards the Corinthians, even when he is complaining of them, e.g. vi, 11-13; vii, 2-11; on the contrary, in chapters x-xiii we have a painful struggle against bitter opponents. It has sometimes been inferred that these four last chapters form a letter distinct from the nine earlier ones, and that this was written either before or after the other. This conclusion is not necessary. Cf. Juelicher, *Einleitung*, pp. 96-101, and Lietzmann, *op. cit.*, n. on x, 1.

such a man (whether in the body, or out of the body, I know not, God knoweth), that he was caught up into paradise, and heard secret words which it is not granted to man to utter. For such an one I will glory; but for myself I will glory nothing but in my infirmities. For if I should have a mind to glory, I shall not be foolish, for I will say the truth. But I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth in me, or any thing he heareth from me. And lest the greatness of the revelations should exalt me, there was given me a sting of my flesh, an angel of Satan, to buffet me. For which thing thrice I besought the Lord, that it might depart from me. And he said to me: My grace is sufficient for thee: for power is made perfect in infirmity. Gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me. For which cause I take pleasure in my infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ. For when I am weak, then am I powerful" (xii, 1-10).

These last words introduce us to the deepest aspect in the Apostle's doctrine. On the day of his conversion at Damascus, Jesus said to Ananias when sending him to Paul: "I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake" (Acts ix, 16). Twenty years had passed since then, charged for Paul with more painful trials and heavy burdens than he could have foreseen, but all these blows wounded him only in order to make Christ live in him and to enable him to communicate this life to other souls:

"We bear always about in our body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodies. For we who live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death worketh in us, but life in you" (iv, 10-12).

"For which cause we faint not, but though our outward man is decaying, yet the inward man is renewed from day to day. For our present momentary and light tribulation worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. For we know that if our earthly house of this habitation be dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in heaven. For in this also we groan, desiring to be clothed upon with our habitation that is from heaven, yet so that we be found clothed, not naked. For we who are in this tabernacle do groan, being

burthened because we would not be unclothed, but clothed upon, that that which is mortal may be swallowed up by life" (iv, 16—v, 4).

### *The Letter to the Galatians*

At the same time that this painful crisis was becoming less acute at Corinth, Paul had to face up to other opponents, also of Judaising origin, who had invaded the church founded by him in Galatia,<sup>5</sup> and had endeavoured, not without success, to entangle the new Christians in the practices of Judaism.<sup>6</sup>

To his disciples, once so devoted, Paul recalls the welcome which they had given him: afflicted by illness, the Apostle had been received by them as an angel of God, as Jesus Christ (iv, 13-14); till then they knew only gods who are not God; now they knew God (iii, 8-9); they had become his children and heirs (iii, 7); they had received the Spirit, they had suffered, miracles had been worked amongst them (iii, 3-5); they had run well (v, 7); now however all was upset; how speedy this change had been! "I wonder that you are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ, unto another Gospel" (i, 6).

To lead the Galatians astray Paul's opponents had attacked him personally, saying that he was not an immediate disciple of Christ. He replies by telling how he had received his Gospel, not of men, but by revelation of Jesus Christ (i, 11 *et seq.*). They had said that he was disowned by the great Apostles; he vindicates his agreement with them by giving an account of the meeting at Jerusalem (ii,

<sup>5</sup> We think that this letter was addressed, not to the churches of Lycaonia, but to the Galatians (cf. *supra*, p. 220, n. 7). Accordingly we cannot put this letter before the second journey to Galatia (Acts xviii, 23), or before the stay at Ephesus. Many exegetes think that this letter was written at Ephesus before the two Epistles to the Corinthians; Lightfoot prefers to put it between *II Corinthians* and *Romans*; in this case the letter would have been written from Macedonia or Achaia. Cf. Prat, *Theology of St. Paul*, Vol. I, p. 163; Lagrange (*op. cit.*, p. xxviii) leaves the question undecided between Ephesus and Corinth. It is certain that *Galatians* is prior to *Romans*; it seems to us most likely that it was written after the two letters to the Corinthians.

<sup>6</sup> Many exegetes think that the opponents of St. Paul were endeavouring to spread in Galatia a mitigated Judaism, holding that the Law was not indispensable for salvation but that it was a source of moral perfection. This interpretation would harmonise with the Decree of Jerusalem, but not easily with the Epistle: the Judaism preached in Galatia appears therein as an extreme and virulent Judaism; there is question not of privileges or of perfection, but of salvation. Cf. Lagrange, *op. cit.*, pp. xxxviii-xlv.



1-10). Lastly, he was reproached for inconsistency; alluding perhaps to his circumcision of Timothy, he was accused of preaching circumcision when with the Jews: "If I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution?" (v, 11; cf. i, 10).

After thus upsetting the Galatians by these attacks against St. Paul, the false apostles had endeavoured to seduce them: the yoke of the Law might attract them because it imposed on them material observances similar to those which they had previously practised, "days and months, and times and years" (iv, 10); they were told that circumcision alone would ensure for them the inheritance of the promises, they had been made to fall from grace inasmuch as they had been taught to seek for justification in the Law (v, 4). One can understand that this teaching could win a good number of these ardent new Christians who were as yet not properly instructed; they were persuaded that they were as yet only half children of God, and that these new masters were leading them beyond Paul to Jesus, and beyond Jesus to Moses and Abraham. Besides the prestige of ancient doctrine and the attraction of Jewish rites, they were subjected to the fear of persecution: circumcision would keep them from this by giving them the safeguard of Jewish privileges (vi, 12).

To rescue them from this propaganda, Paul preaches to them the Cross of Christ; this had been his first preaching: he had set before their eyes Jesus Christ crucified (iii, 1). He returns to this in his epistle with passionate insistence:

"I am dead to the Law that I may live to God: with Christ I am nailed to the Cross. And I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me. And if I live now in the flesh: I live in the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and delivered himself for me (ii, 19-20).

"They that are Christ's have crucified their flesh, with the vices and concupiscences" (v, 2).

After dictating his letter, he adds to it these last words:

"See what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand. As many as desire to please in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law, but they will have you to be circumcised that they may glory in your flesh. But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world. For

in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And whosoever shall follow this rule, peace on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God. From henceforth let no man be troublesome to me, for I bear the marks of the Lord Jesus in my body" (vi, 11-17).

The Christian liberty which Christ consecrated by his Cross is the whole theme of this epistle. In his letter to the Romans, St. Paul takes it up again and enlarges upon it: there he will reveal the great perspectives of the salvation of the world and of the Christian life, but addressing himself to a church which he had neither founded nor visited, he will not write his letter in the tone of paternal tenderness which makes the Epistle to the Galatians so moving: "My little children, of whom I am in labour again, until Christ be formed in you" (iv, 19). Of all the letters of St. Paul there is none which makes us understand better the first years of Christianity, or that makes more vivid and actual the preaching of the Apostle.<sup>7</sup>

### *The Letter to the Romans*

The letter to the Romans,<sup>8</sup> much richer than the Epistle to the Galatians in dogmatic teaching, is poorer in historical information, and this is easy to understand, for the church to which Paul addresses his letter had neither been founded nor visited by him.<sup>9</sup> Several times Paul had wanted to go to Rome;<sup>10</sup> his apostolate covered all the Gentiles, and the Romans in consequence; but he had abstained from treading in the footsteps of others; hence he could not go to preach in Rome.<sup>11</sup> In order to keep to this rule and yet not to fail in what he owed to the Romans, Paul thought of going to Spain, seeing the Romans *en route* (Rom. xv, 23). For he

<sup>7</sup> Loisy (*Lettre aux Galates*, Paris, 1916) thus ends his introduction: "The critical analysis of our epistle will help us to penetrate not only the secret of primitive Christian history, but also that of the very special ferment from which sprang the ideas which were destined to constitute eventually the substance of Christian dogma." This impression is correct, provided one recognises in this "ferment" the divine inspiration which revealed Christian dogma.

<sup>8</sup> This letter was written from Corinth in the course of the winter of 56-7.

<sup>9</sup> On the origin of the Roman Church, cf. *infra*, ch. iv.

<sup>10</sup> Acts xix, 21; Rom. i, 11-15; xv, 23.

<sup>11</sup> Rom. xv, 20-22; cf. II Cor. x, 15-16. At Ephesus Paul had had no scruple at preaching after Apollos, or even after Aquila and Priscilla; these preachers had made Christ known, but had not founded a church; at Rome the situation was different.

considered that he had "no more place" in the East, inasmuch as he had spread abroad the Gospel from Jerusalem as far as Illyricum (xv, 19). The communities thus founded would grow, and the West was calling him. God had in reserve for him an opportunity of evangelising Rome which he could not yet foresee: He would say to him later on: "As thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome" (*Acts* xxiii, 11).

Meanwhile it was useful to remove the misunderstandings which might arise in Rome, either concerning this journey always desired and always put off, or above all as to the gospel of Paul. There was no urgent danger, but the enemies of the Apostle, active everywhere, might extend their intrigues to Rome, and it was important to forestall them (*Rom.* xvi, 17-20). Paul did this by taking up once more the theme of the letter to the Galatians, and developing its dogmatic teaching for its own sake, without direct reference to opponents who had not yet shown themselves. The circumstances were momentous: Paul was at Corinth, in land won by him; behind him the whole Greek world had been evangelised; before him was Rome and the distant West, and between the two, Jerusalem, where he went not without apprehension (xv, 30-33). He felt that this letter would perhaps be his testament; at least it closed a period in his life. It is the most fully developed exposition of the Gospel of freedom and adoption for which he had laboured so hard and suffered so much.

### *The Reign of Sin*

The religious truth which he saw illumined the whole world for him: from the beginning, sin had entered into the world through the act of just one man, and death had entered as well (v, 12), and in the whole world sin reigns over the pagans and the Jews: "All are under sin, as it is written: 'There is not any man just'" (iii, 9). The pagans could have known God by his works; they had not recognised Him, they had not glorified Him, they had not thanked Him; and God, to punish them, had given them up to their shameful passions and to unnatural vices (i, 18-27); "and as they liked not to have God in their knowledge, God delivered them up to a reprobate sense, to do those things which are not convenient; being filled with all iniquity, malice, fornication, avarice, wickedness, full of envy, murder, contention, deceit, malignity, whisperers, detractors,

hateful to God, contumelious, proud, haughty, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, foolish, dissolute, without affection, without fidelity, without mercy. Who, having known the justice of God, did not understand that they who do such things, are worthy of death; and not only they that do them, but they also that consent to them that do them" (i, 28-32).

Such is the pagan world, with its inexcusable impiety and its shameful impurity; will the Jew turn out to be more religious and more holy? He boasts that he is, but St. Paul continues the relentless examination:

"Thou art called a Jew, and retest in the Law, and makest thy boast of God, and knowest his will, and approvest the more profitable things, being instructed in the Law, and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them that are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of infants, having the form of knowledge and of truth in the Law. Thou therefore that teachest another, teachest not thyself: thou that preachest that men should not steal, stealest: thou that sayest men should not commit adultery, committest adultery: thou that abhorrest idols, committest sacrilege: thou that makest thy boast of the Law, by transgression of the Law dishonourest God. For the name of God through you is blasphemed among the Gentiles, as it is written" (ii, 17-23).

This terrible indictment does not make the Apostle forget the privileges of the Jews or the utility of circumcision (iii, 1); he proclaims it, and he will later on (ix, 4) recall that to the Jews belong "the adoption as of children, and the glory, and the testament, and the giving of the Law, and the service of God, and the promises, whose are the fathers, and of whom is Christ according to the flesh" (ix, 4-5). But just as the pagans who could have known God through his works did not recognise Him, so also the Jews, with whom God had made this alliance, were unfaithful to Him. Thus "every mouth is stopped, and all the world is shown to be guilty before God" (iii, 19). "There is no distinction, for all have sinned, and do lack the glory of God, and must be justified freely, by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (iii, 22-24).

### *God's Mercy*

Thus God's plan begins to be revealed: if He has allowed the whole human race to be involved in this catastrophe, it is that He

may save it all. "God hath concluded all in unbelief, that He may have mercy on all. O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are his judgments, and how unsearchable his ways!" (xi, 32-33).

These tremendous perspectives, in face of which man is confounded with fear and wonder, prepare the Christian to understand the mystery of his death and his life. Such is the centre of St. Paul's mysticism; these profound intuitions appear in several epistles, but it is in the letter to the Romans that they are most powerfully set forth.<sup>12</sup>

"All we who are baptized in Christ Jesus, are baptized in his death. For we are buried together with him by baptism unto death, that as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we should be also in the likeness of his resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin may be destroyed, to the end that we may serve sin no longer. For he that is dead is justified from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall live also together with Christ. Knowing that Christ rising again from the dead, dieth now no more, death shall no more have dominion over him. For in that he died to sin, he died once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. So do you also reckon, that you are dead to sin, but alive unto God, in Christ Jesus our Lord" (vi, 3-11).

In this important passage we have the thought of the Apostle in all its force: Christ has died and risen; by baptism he unites us to his death and resurrection; under several different images St. Paul tries to bring out the great mystery of the destiny of the Christian: he was a slave of sin; he is going to become a child of God; he can do so only by being incorporated into the only begotten Son of God; Christ, in taking hold of him, unites him to His death and resurrection; He buries him together with Himself in death, in order to make him rise again with Himself to a new life.

This transformation of the Christian by baptism is in other passages described as a new birth;<sup>13</sup> elsewhere again as a purification, an ablution.<sup>14</sup> St. Paul prefers to regard it as a passing from death to

<sup>12</sup> On the mysticism of St. Paul, cf. A. Wikenhauser, *Die Christusbaptismus des hl. Paulus*, Münster, 1928, and A. Schweitzer, *Die Mystik des Apostels Paulus*, Tübingen, 1930.

<sup>13</sup> Above all in the discourse of Jesus to Nicodemus (*John* iii, 5-7) and in St. Paul's Epistle to Titus (iii, 5).

<sup>14</sup> *I Cor.* vi, 11; *Eph.* v, 26; *Titus* iii, 5.

life, and what he means thereby is not only a symbol, but a profound reality, which is seen by us first of all in Jesus Himself, "delivered up for our sins, and raised again for our justification" (iv, 25)<sup>15</sup> and is reproduced in every Christian: united to Christ in baptism, he is dead to sin and lives to God. Doubtless so long as he is here below, neither this death nor this life is perfect. While the inner man, the new man, delights in the law of God, he feels still in his members another law which captivates him in the law of sin. "Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (vii, 22-24). He is saved only in hope (vii, 24), but "hope confoundeth not, because the charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost who is given to us" (v, 5).

This gift of the Spirit is what makes a Christian, and gives him life: "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body indeed is dead because of sin, but the spirit liveth because of justification. And if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you, he that raised up Jesus Christ from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies, because of his Spirit that dwelleth in you" (vii, 9-11).

All this deep mysticism has its immediate echo in the moral life of the Christian: "Therefore brethren we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you shall die, but if by the Spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live" (vii, 12-13).

In this constant and intimate effort, our weakness is supported by the Spirit; we do not even know what to ask for, but the Spirit asks for us with unspeakable groanings, and God who searcheth hearts knows what the Spirit desires, for the Spirit pleads before God for the saints (viii, 26-27).

Lastly, we are not alone: the whole creation groans, it is in travail (viii, 22), aroused by the expectation of a new life. Thus is revealed to us the unity of humanity and the world: everything in it was wounded and blighted by sin, everything is restored under the action of Christ and leads towards God.

### *God as Beginning and End*

God is the beginning and end of all things. Certainly, in the mysticism of St. Paul Christ is in the foreground, but that is as

<sup>15</sup> Cf. *Prat. op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 256-60.

coming from the Father and leading us to the Father. "God commendeth his charity towards us, because when as yet we were sinners, Christ died for us" (v; 8).

This infinite gift is applied to each Christian by a special predestination:

"Those whom we foreknew, he also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn amongst many brethren. And whom he predestinated, them he also called. And whom he called, them he also justified. And whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who is against us? He that spared not even his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how hath he not also, with him, given us all things? Who shall accuse against the elect of God? God justifieth: who shall condemn? Christ Jesus? He who died, yea is risen also again, who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? . . . I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor might, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (vii, 29-39).

All the mysticism of St. Paul appears in this glowing passage, and not only, as it has been said,<sup>16</sup> Christological mysticism, but also Divine mysticism. Indeed, the two are inseparable, it is in Christ our Lord that we attain to God, but we really attain to Him, and the terminus of this gradual transformation which the life of Christ brings about in the Christian is God all in all (*I Cor.* xv, 28).

### *Paul Leaves for Jerusalem*

Leaving Corinth, where he had written this letter,<sup>17</sup> Paul went to Jerusalem to hand in the alms he had gathered. For a long time

<sup>16</sup> Schweitzer, *op. cit.*, p. 3: "In Paul there is no Divine mysticism, but only the mysticism of Christ by which man enters into relation with God."

<sup>17</sup> Of these few months, spent by Paul in Macedonia and Achaia, we know hardly anything: "Paul set forward to go into Macedonia. And when he had gone over those parts, and had exhorted them with many words, he came into Greece. There he spent three months. The Jews laid wait for him as he was about to sail into Syria, so he took a resolution to return through Macedonia" (*Acts* xx, 1-3). In his Epistle to Titus (i, 5), Paul mentions a stay he made in Crete; it has been conjectured that this belongs to this time, after the departure from Macedonia and before the arrival in Corinth (MacGiffert, *Christianity in the Apostolic Age*, p. 411); but we can also put it in the last years of the Apostle, after his captivity

he had prepared this collection.<sup>18</sup> There is nothing more moving than these efforts of the Apostle on behalf of the church of Jerusalem from which so many opponents had come in the past; he hoped that such a display of charity would touch the brethren, and at the same time he regarded it as a work of justice in favour of the saints who had been the first-fruits of the Gospel.<sup>19</sup> Such generous efforts were not sterile: Paul set forth for Jerusalem laden with the offerings of his Christians, and accompanied by representatives of the churches (*Acts* xx, 4).

Nevertheless he was anxious: he wondered how the unconverted would receive him at Jerusalem, and whether the saints themselves would accept his offerings; he begged the prayers of the Romans to this end (xv, 31). These fears were not groundless; from the start he met with traps laid by the Jews; in order to avoid them he had to abandon the projected route, and enter Syria by Macedonia (*Acts* xx, 3).

### *Paul and the Church at Jerusalem*

Before we follow Paul to Jerusalem, we should like to know the history of this church during the years which preceded this journey. Unfortunately this history is very obscure: Luke follows Paul, and speaks of Jerusalem only when the Apostle returns there. Nevertheless, a few facts are known to us: from the persecution under

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(Prat, *Saint Paul*, p. 186). The extended stay which Paul made at Corinth and the tone of his letter to the Romans show that he no longer felt around him the opposition which he had encountered previously: the cause was won. Later, when St. Clement wrote to the Corinthians, he bears witness to the veneration which their church kept for its founder (xlvii).

<sup>18</sup> "Concerning the collections that are made for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, so do ye also. On the first day of the week let every one of you put apart with himself, laying up what it shall well please him" (*I Cor.* xvi, 1). In his second letter he returns to this subject with more insistence, rousing the emulation of the different churches, promising that, if the offering should be worth it, he would go himself to take it: he put before the Corinthians the example of the churches of Macedonia (viii, 1-5); and on the other hand he wrote to them: "I know your forward mind, for which I boast of you to the Macedonians, that Achaia also is ready from the year past, and your emulation hath provoked very many" (*II Cor.* ix, 2).

<sup>19</sup> "Now I shall go to Jerusalem, to minister unto the saints. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a contribution for the poor of the saints that are in Jerusalem. For it hath pleased them, and they are their debtors. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, they ought also in carnal things to minister to them" (*Rom.* xv, 25-7; cf. *Gal.* vi, 6; *II Cor.* ix, 12-14).



Agrippa until the death of James, the Lord's brother, the Church was at peace. This truce of twenty years (42-62) was doubtless ensured by the Roman administration, which had once more taken in hand the government of Judea; it was due also to the respect which the Christians of Jerusalem had for the Law. When Paul arrived at Jerusalem, James said to him: "Thou seest, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews that have believed, and they are all zealous for the Law" (*Acts* xxi, 20). The portrait of James given by Hegesippus<sup>20</sup> presents him as the ideal of fidelity to the Law. It is possible that the liberties granted to the Gentiles by the Decree of Jerusalem led converted Jews to a more exact observance; they were also aware of Paul's action amongst the pagans; the best amongst them rejoiced at it; others did not oppose it; all at least decided to show, in the holy city, the alliance between the Gospel and the Law.

Amongst the Christians at Jerusalem, all could not share the sympathetic trust which the Apostles and the elders had displayed for St. Paul; there were even some who were not able to maintain the reserve which they should at least have shown: it was members of this Church who went to Antioch, upset the converted pagans, and sought to intimidate Paul and Barnabas (*Acts* xv, 1 *et seq.*). It was also probably from thence that the false brethren came who threatened the work of Paul in Galatia, and those "of Christ" who fostered the divisions at Corinth. They do not seem to have undertaken any mission of evangelisation, but they followed the Apostle and countered his activity. The fact that they appealed directly to Christ and above all the distinction between those "of Christ" and those "of Cephas" shows that they could not claim the support of the Apostles; nevertheless they did not fail to oppose these to Paul.

Faced with these intrigues, Paul had to vindicate his independence, and his immediate mission from Our Lord (*Gal.* i, 1, 11-12).<sup>21</sup> He recognised that he was one born out of due time, unworthy to be called an apostle because he had persecuted the Church of God, but he added with humble pride: "By the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace in me hath not been void, but I have laboured more abundantly than all they: yet not I, but the grace of God with me: for whether I, or they, so we preach, and so you have believed"

<sup>20</sup> Cf. *infra*, ch. v, § 1.

<sup>21</sup> Hence also the impatience with which he speaks of these "pillars" (*Gal.* ii, 9), these "great apostles" (*II Cor.* xi, 5; xii, 11).

(*I Cor.* xv, 9-11). At the same time we find in this same chapter the faithful mention of the appearances of the Lord to the eleven, the first witnesses (xv, 5 and 7), and in the first place to Cephas, the chief of them all (xv, 5). Indeed, in all this epistle, the high place occupied by Cephas is clear: even those who exaggerate the weight of the Judaising opposition, and who see here, as in the Epistle to the Galatians, coldness and reserve on the part of Paul towards Peter, cannot deny the respect and the esteem which he displays for him.<sup>22</sup>

What we must insist on before all else—and it is a point of great importance—is that though divergences of opinion were displayed at Antioch, Jerusalem, or elsewhere, these discussions may indeed have raised the question of ritual observances, or again the admission of the Gentiles to salvation and the conditions which ought to be imposed upon them, but never were the Christological or theological dogmas the subject of debate: the preaching of the Gospel was everywhere the same, no matter who might be the apostle who set it forth. That is affirmed by St. Paul in the text we have just recalled: "Whether I, or they: so we preach, and so you have believed."<sup>23</sup>

What precisely these Apostles, and Peter in particular, were doing at this time remains very obscure.<sup>24</sup> It is certain that they also were engaged in missionary work (*I Cor.* ix, 5). Like Paul himself, they took care not to intrude on the fields of other men's labours; from Antioch to Rome we never see any of them with Paul. Certain historians accuse them of not supporting him against the Judaisers at Corinth or in Galatia;<sup>25</sup> that is to decide without proof a question which the texts do not enable us to answer. Moreover, it must be pointed out that Paul, who was so jealous of his apostolic independence, could not deliberately appeal to those whose authority was quoted against him, nor adduce in his own defence the steps

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Weiszaecker, *op. cit.*, p. 350.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. *History of the Doctrine of the Trinity*, Vol. I, pp. 288-9.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. *infra*, ch. iv.

<sup>25</sup> Two points seem certain to Weiszaecker (*op. cit.*, p. 349); "the apostles did not take part in the hostility towards Paul," and "Paul was not openly upheld by them." Lietzmann goes much further; he admits that in the Epistles there is no word against James or against Peter, but he thinks that "if we can read between the lines, we see behind the 'ministers of Satan' and the 'lying apostles' and the 'false brethren' the shadow of the great apostles of Jerusalem; Paul was isolated in his new Christian world, and he felt the worst of oppositions behind him" (*Geschichte*, pp. 108-9). It is dangerous to try to read between the lines.

which these might make on his behalf. On the other hand, we willingly admit that in the midst of so many conflicts, the attitude of the Apostle was admirable: the more he found himself opposed in the Judeo-Christian groups, the more jealous he was to maintain the unity of the Church, and to ensure his union with the saints in Jerusalem; and together with this care for union he shows the veneration, which he retained in spite of everything, for the community which had been the source of Christianity, and to which all the others were debtors. Thus the collection which he was carrying to them was not only a mark of fraternal charity, but a veritable act of homage.

In these circumstances we can understand Paul's fears. Going up to Jerusalem, he no longer asks as previously whether he had "run in vain"; his work was too evidently prosperous and blessed; but he did not know how he would be received by the Jews, and even by the brethren; he could not forget that his life had been often threatened by the ambushes of the Jews; but neither could he forget that the unity of the Church involved consideration for the saints of Jerusalem. And so he set out, and like Christ, he did so with a firm countenance, towards the fate that was in store for him.

### *The Journey*

His companions went on ahead; he rejoined them at Troas.<sup>26</sup> On the Sunday, during Paul's sermon after the breaking of bread, a young man named Eutychus went to sleep, fell from the first floor, and was picked up dead; the Apostle went down and raised him up, and then returned to his preaching. They continued the voyage by coasting vessels from port to port, in order to arrive at Jerusalem for Pentecost. At Miletus Paul summoned the presbyters from Ephesus; after recalling his labours amongst them, he continued:

"And now, behold, being bound in the spirit, I go to Jerusalem; not knowing the things which shall befall me there: save that the Holy Ghost in every city witnesseth to me, saying that bands and afflictions wait for me at Jerusalem. But I fear none of these things, neither do I count my life more precious than myself, so that I may consummate my course, and the ministry of the word which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God" (*Acts* xx, 22-24).

<sup>26</sup> It is here that Luke in his narrative returns to the "we" interrupted at Philippi (xvi, 16): "We sailed from Philippi after the days of the Azymes, and came to them of Troas in five days, where we abode seven days" (*Acts* xx, 6).

He thought that he would see them no more; he therefore gave them his final counsels: wolves would enter in amongst the flock, they were to be watchful. He commended them to God; for the last time he reminded them that he had asked nothing for his labours besides his upkeep and that of his companions: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." When he had ended, they all knelt down, prayed, and wept, embracing him, and saddened above all at the thought that they would see him no more. A moving scene which shows the close union amongst Christians, and the tenderness of Paul's heart.<sup>27</sup>

Paul and his companions thus continued their journey stage by stage. At Patara they found a vessel bound for Phœnicia; they arrived in Syria, then at Tyre, where they waited seven days. There the scenes at Miletus were repeated; the faithful begged Paul not to go to Jerusalem; being unable to dissuade him, they accompanied him to the shore, and all knelt for a common prayer. After passing a day at Ptolemais, Paul arrived at Cæsarea, where he stayed for some days with Philip the Deacon, whose four daughters were prophetesses. The warnings given previously were renewed still more urgently: Agabus, taking Paul's girdle, bound himself hand and foot, saying: "Thus saith the Holy Ghost: The man whose girdle this is, the Jews shall bind in this manner in Jerusalem, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles." All the Christians of Cæsarea and Paul's own companions begged him not to go on to Jerusalem. "What do you mean, weeping and afflicting my heart?" said he to them; "I am ready not only to be bound, but to die also in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." They gave way, saying: "The will of the Lord be done!" (*Acts* xxi, 11-14).

## § 6. THE CAPTIVITY

### *St. Paul in Jerusalem*

Going up to Jerusalem, Paul had a twofold fear: the refusal of his alms by the saints, and persecution by the Jews. The latter fear was to be realised; the former was not. Paul arrived at

<sup>27</sup> In his Commentary, Reuss has stressed the historic value of this discourse: "the most beautiful of all the discourses included in our book, and which, even in the abridged form in which it is given to us, reveals a depth of feeling and a conception of apostolic duty such that it admits of comparison with the most touching pages in the epistles. Everything makes us feel that we have here a summary made by an immediate listener."

Jerusalem, escorted by his two fellow travellers, a few Christians from Cæsarea, and a Cypriot named Mnason, who gave them hospitality. They were also cordially received by the brethren. The next day they went to the house of James, where all the elders were assembled together. Paul gave a detailed account of the success of his ministry amongst the Gentiles; they glorified God and said to the Apostle: "Thou seest, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews that have believed: and they are all zealous for the Law. Now they have heard of thee that thou teachest those Jews who are among the Gentiles to depart from Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, nor walk according to the custom." What was to be done? There were in the community at Jerusalem four men bound by a vow: let Paul join them, and defray the expenses of all. The presbyters add: "As touching the Gentiles that believe, we have written decreeing that they should only refrain themselves from that which has been offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication." Paul agreed to what was asked.<sup>1</sup>

The Apostle, as he had recommended to the Corinthians (*I Cor.* viii, 9) took care that his liberty should not become a stumbling block to the weak; he seems to have attained his object; the violent opposition which he was to encounter came not from the Judaizing Christians, but from the Jews. The seven days of purification were almost at an end when the Jews from Asia noticed him in the Temple. Thinking that he had introduced there an uncircumcised man, Trophimus of Ephesus, they stirred up the populace against him, and there was an attempt to put him to death. The Romans came up and took him away in chains; they thought at first that he was an Egyptian leader of brigands who had fled after the failure of his enterprise.<sup>2</sup> Paul explained who he was, and obtained permission to address the crowd; as he spoke in Hebrew<sup>3</sup> they listened

<sup>1</sup> Some exegetes reject the narrative in the Acts; thus Weiszaecker, *op. cit.*, p. 354. Others accept it, but regard it as a weakness in Paul: Reuss, *op. cit.*, pp. 208 *et seq.* What the Apostle was asked to do here he had done of his own accord at Corinth (*Acts* xviii, 18), and he had written to the Corinthians: "I became to the Jews a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the Law, as if I were under the Law, whereas myself was not under the Law, that I might gain them that were under the Law" (*I Cor.* ix, 20). On this condescension in Paul, cf. J. Lebreton, *Saint Paul*, in *L'Histoire générale comparée des Missions*, pp. 79 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, XX, 8, 6; *Wars of the Jews*, II, 13, 5.

<sup>3</sup> I.e. in Aramaic. Cf. Cadbury, *Beginnings of Christianity*, Vol. V, pp. 59-74.

to him. In this long discourse he gave an account of his Jewish education,<sup>4</sup> his opposition in earlier days to Christianity, his conversion, and finally the vision which determined his vocation as Apostles of the Gentiles: "When I was come again to Jerusalem, and was praying in the Temple, I was in a trance, and saw the Lord saying unto me: Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem, because they will not receive thy testimony concerning me." Paul hesitated, it seemed to him that his past gave him a right to protest, and also he was moved by his love for his people; but the Lord insisted: "Go, for unto the Gentiles afar off will I send thee."<sup>5</sup>

These last words resulted in an explosion of anger amongst the audience; men shouted out, threw off their garments, cast dust into the air. The tribune, who did not know Aramaic, failed to understand what was happening. He ordered Paul to be scourged, but the latter said to the centurion charged with the order: "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?" The tribune, alarmed, had Paul brought in; the next day he put him before the Sanhedrin. Profiting by the hatred between the Pharisees and Sadducees, the Apostles set them against one another; the argument became so violent that the sitting had to be suspended. The next day more than forty Jews informed the chief priests that they had taken an oath not to eat until they had slain Paul. A nephew of the Apostle learnt this; he warned Paul, and, on his advice, informed the tribune Lysias also, who decided to send the accused well guarded to Cæsarea. Thus what the Lord had revealed to St. Paul the night before began to be realised: "Be constant, for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> We notice in all this speech the Judaic elements stressed by Paul, not only his education (xxii, 3) and his intolerance (4-5), but in the account of his conversion, the picture he gives of Ananias: "a man according to the Law, having testimony of all the Jews of Damascus" (12); the discourse of Ananias: "The God of our fathers hath preordained thee that thou shouldst know his will, and see the Just One, and shouldst hear the voice from his mouth"; and lastly the circumstances of the decisive vision at Jerusalem in the Temple.

<sup>5</sup> This mention made by the Apostle of his vision in the Temple reveals to us an unknown fact in his life (how many others there must be!), one of the visions summarily mentioned in *II Cor.* xii; it also shows us the inmost dispositions of Paul in the first days of his apostolate. This stay at Jerusalem is doubtless the one mentioned in *Acts* ix, 26.

<sup>6</sup> xxiii, 11. The coup aimed at Paul did not affect the Christians at Jerusalem; it was an explosion of anger against the Apostle of the Gentiles, not a general persecution.

*St. Paul at Cæsarea*

The procurator Felix, into whose hands the Apostle now came, was one of the worst governors Judea ever had. A freedman, brother of Pallas, he had been called to the government thanks to his protection, and as Tacitus says, "cruel and debauched, he exercised the royal power with the soul of a slave."<sup>7</sup>

The Jews did not abandon the struggle; five days later, the high priest Ananias arrived at Cæsarea with the elders and a lawyer, Tertullus. After a flattering address, they all demanded that Paul should be given up to them, since the crime of which they accused him came within the competence of the Sanhedrin. Paul replied that he had been guilty neither of sedition nor of disorder; he had been arrested in the Temple while carrying out the sacred rites of his religion; he demanded that his accusers, the Jews from Asia, should come forward themselves. Felix must have known about Christians, since there were some at Cæsarea. He adjourned the case. A few days later he summoned Paul in the presence of his wife Drusilla, and desired him to speak about faith in Christ. Paul did not satisfy his curiosity any more than Jesus had done before Herod, and his debauched court; Paul spoke "of justice, and chastity, and of the judgment to come"; Felix broke off the conversation, and sent Paul away. He kept the Apostle in prison for two years, calling him to him from time to time in the hope of receiving money.

Concerning these two years, the Acts tell us nothing further;<sup>8</sup> it is certain, nevertheless, that the prolonged stay of St. Paul in Palestine was not without fruit; it put the Apostle in personal and close touch with the Palestinian circles which were outside his domain and which he had scarcely touched hitherto; it also enabled St. Luke, the faithful companion of St. Paul, to gather at Cæsarea and Judea in general the tradition of the early disciples of Jesus. This was to constitute a source of inestimable value for his Gospel and for the whole Church.<sup>9</sup>

In 59 Felix was replaced by Portius Festus. The new procurator

<sup>7</sup> *Hist.*, V, 9; cf. *Annals*, xii, 54. Josephus judges him as severely as Tacitus (cf. *Wars of the Jews*, II, 13, 7; *Antiquities of the Jews*, XX, 8, 5, 162; XX, 8, 7, 177). He had married Drusilla, the sister of Agrippa II, daughter of Agrippa I.

<sup>8</sup> Some historians, e.g. Sabatier (*L'apôtre Paul*, 1896, p. 233), date the letters to the Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon from Cæsarea; there is nothing to be said in favour of this hypothesis.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 222.

seems to have been an upright but weak magistrate. The Jews requested him to transfer Paul to Jerusalem; Felix consulted the prisoner; the latter, fearing the favour which the governor was showing for his opponents, and tired of the interminable delays in the case, appealed to Cæsar.<sup>10</sup>

The prisoner, under the guard of an escort commanded by the centurion Julius, set out for Italy. It was already autumn; the crossing was dangerous; when Crete was reached, Paul advised his companions to winter there; but they disagreed, and set forth. Hardly had they gone outside the port when the storm broke; for fourteen days the vessel, with all sails reefed, was driven before it, and ended by being wrecked on the coast of Malta. All this is narrated with an abundance and precision of detail in which we recognise Paul's companion. The Apostle is seen, although a prisoner, as dominating the rest not only by his supernatural gifts, revelations (xxvii, 23), and miracles (xxviii, 5), but also by his human qualities of prudence, decision, and firmness.<sup>11</sup>

### *St. Paul in Rome*

Disembarking at Puteoli, Paul found some Christians there, and spent seven days with them, and then he left for Rome. Some brethren from Rome came to meet him at the Forum of Appius and the Three Taverns; "whom when Paul saw, he gave thanks to God, and took courage"; this was his first contact with the Roman community. Three days after his arrival, he called together the principal Jews and set forth his case, dissipating with his usual tact the suspicions which his appeal to Rome might have caused; he had done nothing against his people, or against the traditions of

<sup>10</sup> A few days later, Agrippa II arrived with his sister Berenice; Festus consulted him about the case; Agrippa was curious to hear Paul himself; Paul gave an account of his conversion, and his calling to the apostolate (xxvi, 1-23); Festus, not understanding anything of this, said impatiently: "Paul, thou art beside thyself: much learning doth make thee mad." Paul then appealed to Agrippa as a witness, and said to him: "Believest thou the prophets, O king Agrippa? I know that thou believest." The king, worried by the presence of Festus and the Jews, gave the reply: "In a little, thou persuadest me to become a Christian!" After a courteous and clever retort by Paul, they all stood up, and said he was innocent.

<sup>11</sup> xxvii, 10, 21, 31, 33. We may compare this journey to that which Josephus made three or four years afterwards (*Life*, 3): in 63-4 he went to Rome to take aid to some Jewish priests taking part in a trial before Cæsar; he was shipwrecked, arrived at Puteoli, had himself presented to Poppea by a Jew, Aliturus, and obtained not only the liberation of his friends, but also presents.



the fathers; he had not come to Rome to plead against his nation; lastly, "for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain." These last words led to questionings, the more because the Romans knew that "this sect is everywhere contradicted." On the day they had fixed, they came in greater numbers, and from morning till evening Paul preached to them Jesus, basing himself on Moses and the prophets. Some were touched; others did not believe. To this resistance Paul opposed only this:

"Well did the Holy Ghost speak to our fathers by Isaias the prophet, saying 'Go to this people, and say to them: With the ear you shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing you shall see, and shall not perceive. For the heart of this people is grown gross, and with their ears have they heard heavily, and their eyes they have shut; lest perhaps they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.'

"Be it known therefore to you, that this salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it" (xxviii, 25-28).

This prophetic warning brings to a close the book of the Acts.<sup>12</sup> This oracle of Isaias had been quoted by Jesus to the crowds in Galilee when He preached to them the kingdom of God in parables; St. John will soon recall it towards the end of his gospel (xii, 39-41); but this hardening of the Jews will not be without compensation; God will not be deprived of His glory; the message refused by Israel will be received by the Gentiles.<sup>13</sup>

### *The Prisoner of Christ*

The captivity of St. Paul at Rome continued for two years. He was not shut up in the public prison; he was allowed to stay in a

<sup>12</sup> St. Luke adds only a word or two to say that Paul thus spent two years in Rome, preaching the Lord Jesus without prohibition. This abrupt ending has caused much comment. We may say with Père Boudou (*op. cit.*, p. 567): "The best explanation would seem to be that Luke knew nothing further. He arrived at the same time at the end of his roll, and the close of the events which had been going on before his eyes." He adds: "He had aimed at showing the expansion of Christianity as far as the ends of the earth." Lake emphasises this last point: "It was enough for the author to have conducted Paul to Rome to bear witness to the Gospel. His last sentence is a song of triumph in his chains. It is not a sentence written by chance. It was rather the conclusion deliberately chosen by the author." Cf. *infra*, p. 278, n. 1.

<sup>13</sup> These last words likewise constitute an echo of the gospel and the apostolic preaching (Acts xiii, 46-8).

house which he had hired (*Acts* xxviii, 30), but he was loaded with chains;<sup>14</sup> he was linked to a soldier who left him neither day nor night; he could no longer go about; when he wished to give explanations to the Jews he had to call them to him. All this was obviously not only a great trial but also a great hindrance; there was no more preaching in the synagogues, no more of those visits to houses which he had so often made. On the other hand, this "prisoner of Christ" acquired a new authority; his mission was no longer discussed or countered as it had been; at the price of his liberty he had purchased the liberation of the pagans.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, at Rome his captivity proved to be to the advantage of the Gospel. All the soldiers who successively were appointed to guard him, and were witnesses of his conversations and of his whole manner of life, came to know Christ: "throughout the whole prætorian guard and everywhere else it is known that it is for Christ that I am in bonds" (*Philippians*, i, 13). The Roman Christians were encouraged by his bonds, and spoke with more assurance in consequence (*ibid.* 14); certainly there were some who preached out of envy; but this did not matter, so long as Christ was preached (15-18). We see by this that opposition displayed itself even at Rome (*cf.* iii, 2); but it showed itself in an emulation in preaching rather than in direct attacks.

There were some faithful friends grouped around the prisoner: Luke, his fellow traveller, his "beloved physician," soon to become his historian;<sup>16</sup> Timothy, his most dear disciple, already intimately associated with his labours,<sup>17</sup> soon to be charged with heavy pastoral responsibilities; "Mark, cousin to Barnabas," who had once been separated from Paul by a slight disagreement, but now was again his "helper";<sup>18</sup> then some representatives of the churches of Macedonia and Asia: Aristarchus of Thessalonica, who but lately had shared the danger of Paul at Ephesus<sup>19</sup> and now shared his captivity in Rome;<sup>20</sup> from Colossa had come Epaphras, himself also

<sup>14</sup> As at Cæsarea (xxvi, 29) so at Rome (xxviii, 17, 20); *Philemon*, i, 9, 10, 13; *Phil.* i, 7, 13, 14, 17; *Coloss.* iv, 3, 18; *Ephes.* vi, 20.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. A. Robinson, *Ephesians*, p. 10, and on this captivity at Rome, Lightfoot, *Philippians*, pp. 1-29.

<sup>16</sup> *Coloss.* iv, 14; *Philem.*, 24.

<sup>17</sup> Thus he appears together with Paul in the salutations addressed to the Colossians and the Philippians.

<sup>18</sup> *Coloss.* iv, 10; *Philem.*, 24.

<sup>19</sup> *Acts* xix, 29.

<sup>20</sup> *Coloss.* iv, 10.

a companion in Paul's captivity; <sup>21</sup> from Ephesus Tychicus; <sup>22</sup> from Philippi, Epaphroditus. The latter had come to Rome, bringing to Paul the aid sent to him by his faithful Philippians; he would have liked to devote himself to the service of the Apostle, but his strength was not equal to his devotion; he fell gravely ill, and his life was in danger; "but God had mercy on him, and not only on him, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow; therefore I sent him the more speedily, that seeing him again you may rejoice, and I may be without sorrow." <sup>23</sup>

Thus this lengthy trial had not loosened the bonds which united the Apostle to the churches he had founded; Paul saw hastening to him from the far-off provinces of Greece and Asia disciples whose filial tenderness was now penetrated with a new veneration for the prisoner of Christ. It was thus that the disciples of John the Baptist had gathered round him in his prison at Machaerus; in the same way during the three next centuries the confessors will see their brethren in the faith hastening to their dungeons to serve and venerate them.

### *The Epistles of the Captivity*

To this veneration and these services Paul replies by letters. To the Philippians he sends his thanks and his counsels.<sup>24</sup> To the Colossians, threatened by a Judaising gnosis, he gives urgent warnings.<sup>25</sup> To the Christians of the churches of Asia he sends doctrinal instructions bearing chiefly on the mystery of Christ and the Church.<sup>26</sup> These letters, and especially the two last, do not put before us the Apostle and his churches in vivid descriptions such as those which we read in the epistles to the Corinthians or the Galatians but they set forth a theology, the wide perspectives of which shine with a peaceful and warm light. Thus, to encourage the Philippians to cultivate Christian humility, Paul puts before them the example of Christ:

"Being in the form of God, he thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in

<sup>21</sup> *Philem.*, 23.

<sup>22</sup> *Coloss.* iv, 7; *Ephes.* vi, 21.

<sup>23</sup> *Philipp.* ii, 25-30; iv, 14-18.

<sup>24</sup> *Supra*, p. 222.

<sup>25</sup> *Bk. II.*, ch. vi, § 3.

<sup>26</sup> This is the epistle which was later on given the name of Epistle to the Ephesians; cf. *supra*, p. 252, n. 25.

the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man. He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross. For which cause God also hath exalted him, and hath given him a name which is above all names, that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." <sup>27</sup>

In order to turn away the Colossians from the ambitious and perverse speculations which were threatening their faith, the Apostle sets before them the dogma of the universal mediation of Christ, and His transcendence:

"God hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love, in whom we have redemption through his blood, the remission of sins; who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn before every creature. For in him were all things created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, or dominations, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and in him, and he is before all, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the Church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things he may hold the primacy; because in him it hath well pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell, and through him to reconcile all things unto himself, making peace through the blood of his cross, both as to the things that are on earth, and the things that are in heaven." <sup>28</sup>

In the Epistle to the Ephesians he sets forth as a whole the theology of the Church, the body of Christ, which he had already sketched out in strong lines in the Epistle to the Corinthians (I, xii, 12-27):

"Christ gave some Apostles, and some prophets, and other some evangelists, and other some pastors and doctors, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, until we all meet into the unity of faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the age of the fullness of Christ, that henceforth we be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the wickedness of men, by cunning craftiness, by which they lie in wait to deceive, but doing the truth in charity, we may in all things grow up in him who

<sup>27</sup> *Philipp.* ii, 5-11. Cf. *History of the Doctrine of the Trinity*, Vol. I, pp.

311-14.

<sup>28</sup> *Coloss.* i, 13-20. Cf. *History of the Doctrine of the Trinity*, Vol. I., pp. 297-302.

is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being compacted and fitly joined together, by what every joint supplieth, according to the operation in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in charity."<sup>29</sup>

These splendid pages do not set forth a new revelation, but in them the Christian theology unfolds itself in light; it is all there: in the forefront we have the redemptive plan which saves all humanity, which calls the nations to share the inheritance, and which makes them into members of the body of Christ:

"It is by revelation that the mystery has been made known to me, such as I have written above in a few words. As you read, you may understand my knowledge of the mystery of Christ, which in other generations was not known to the sons of men as clearly as it is now revealed to his holy Apostles and prophets: it is that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs and of the same body, and co-partners of his promise in Christ Jesus, by the gospel" (*ibid.*, iii, 3-6).

Then above all we have Christ Himself and His "unsearchable riches": that is the Gospel which has been entrusted to Paul, "the least of all the saints" (*ibid.*, iii, 8).

At the same time that he sets forth these high doctrines, the prisoner of Christ intercedes for a fugitive and thieving slave: that is the subject of the note to Philemon, one of the most charming pages written by the Apostle's pen:

"If therefore thou count me a partner, receive him as myself. And if he hath wronged thee in any thing, or is in thy debt, put that to my account. I Paul write this with my own hand: I will repay it. . . ."

And then he expresses his hope of a speedy deliverance:

"Prepare me also a lodging. For I hope that through your prayers I shall soon be given unto you" (*Philemon*, 17-22).

## § 7. THE LAST YEARS

The hope which St. Paul expressed to Philemon was at last to be realised: after his long imprisonment which, at Cæsarea and Rome, had lasted four or five years, the Apostle was set at liberty.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>29</sup> *Ephes.* iv, 11-16. Cf. E. Mersch, *Le Corps mystique du Christ*, Louvain, 1933, Vol. I, pp. 119-23 (pp. 184-5 in 1936 edn.).

<sup>1</sup> Was the case terminated by a judgment of the Emperor? Or was the prosecu-

*St. Paul in Asia*

This deliverance, certainly anterior to the summer of 64,<sup>2</sup> was to enable St. Paul to make a last effort. We can hardly get a glimpse of it; now that the Acts no longer help us, we have to guide us nothing but a few scattered indications, combined with conjectures. For a long time the Apostle had wished to go to Spain (*Rom.* xv, 24); he seems indeed to have gone there.<sup>3</sup> Then he made a tour amongst his Christian communities in Asia and Greece. We can follow his path in the Pastorals: he left Timothy at Ephesus when returning to Macedonia (*I Tim.*, i, 3); he passed into Crete, where Titus remained (*Titus* i, 5); at Miletus he had to part from Trophimus, who was ill (*II Tim.* iv, 20); he went on to Corinth, where Erastes stopped (*ibid.*). He went to Nicopolis in Epirus, where he intended to spend the winter (*Tit.* i, 5). From thence he seems to have gone back to Asia, and to have been made a prisoner there.<sup>4</sup>

The succession of these steps is very uncertain. What we gather at any rate is the Apostle's intention. Time presses, his life is ebbing away; when a prisoner at Rome, he wrote to the Philippians: "If I be made a victim upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice, and congratulate with you all" (ii, 17). Now the hour has

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tion abandoned, in the absence of his accusers? We do not know at all. In favour of the second hypothesis may be mentioned an edict of Nero which has come down to us in a papyrus (BG-U, 628 recto, reproduced by H. J. Cadbury, *Beginnings*, Vol. V, pp. 333-4): in capital causes which are passed on from the provinces to Rome, the Emperor determines the lapse of time within which the accused and the accusers must present themselves: "et accusatoribus et reis in Italia quidem novem menses dabuntur transalpinis autem et transmarinis annus et sex menses." On this edict, cf. E. Cuq, in *Nouvelle Revue historique de droit français et étranger*, Vol. XXIII, 1899, pp. 111 et seq. The text, which is incomplete, does not say what will happen in case of default; we may believe that the accused would be sent away free. If this happened in the case of Paul, we understand why Luke did not mention a final judgment which did not take place. Cf. Cadbury, *op. cit.*, p. 335. We are thus led back to the hypothesis suggested by Lake (quoted *ibid.*, p. 328) to explain the abrupt ending of the book: "The result of the case was favourable to Paul, but such that it added nothing to Luke's argument, and was from this point of view a disappointment."

<sup>2</sup> Date of the burning of Rome and of Nero's persecution: if at this date Paul had still been at Rome he would have been one of the first victims.

<sup>3</sup> Thirty-five years later, Clement will write: "He went to the extremities of the West" (*I Clem.*, V).

<sup>4</sup> Perhaps at Troas, which would explain how he came to leave his cloak with Carpus, and his books also, which he asks for later on (*II Tim.* iv. 13). Cf. Prat, *Saint Paul*, p. 190.

come (*II Tim.* iv, 6). In presence of the imminence of the separation, his anxiety for the future becomes more urgent: all these Churches of which he was the father were going to be deprived of his support; it was necessary to see that they were taken in hand by faithful leaders who would maintain the work of the Apostle and of Christ.

For the rest, this care for organisation was not a new thing in Paul: he was eminently a founder. We have seen how at the end of his first mission he returned the same way, passing once more through Lystra, Iconium and Antioch to strengthen the courage of the brethren and to give them presbyters (*Acts* xiv, 20-22). When he left again three years later, his first desire was to "visit our brethren in all the cities wherein we have preached the word of the Lord, to see how they do" (xv, 36). We find the same preoccupation at the end of this journey, when, on passing by Miletus, he called there the elders from Ephesus, and urged them to watch over the flock under their charge, and to defend it against wolves (xx, 29). Now the departure he contemplates is definitive, and the wolves threaten. Thus the letters to Timothy and to Titus are as it were a testament: to his disciples, whom he had made his collaborators, and to whom he is going to leave a part of his heavy charge, the Apostle hands on the deposit which he had received, that they might guard it by the Holy Ghost, "who dwelleth in us."<sup>5</sup> Thus once more we find in the teaching of St. Paul these two essential and inseparable characteristics: authority, and the Spirit. There is a tradition, a deposit, received with obedience and faithfully handed on; and this deposit is living, animated by the Holy Spirit who through it communicates light and life to each believer and to the whole Church.

### *Prisoner in Rome*

The second letter to Timothy was written from Rome. Paul was once more a prisoner there, but this new captivity was not like the first. The persecution which broke over the church of Rome in 64 dealt it a terrible blow. Those who were taken formed, in Tacitus's words, "an immense multitude"; the tortures which the criminal

<sup>5</sup> *II Tim.* i, 14; cf. *I Tim.* vi, 20. We shall return later to the Pastoral epistles, when studying the primitive hierarchy and the struggle against Gnosticism (Bk. II).

ingenuity of Nero invented for them terrified and revolted even their enemies. Stricken down by this barbarous assault, the Roman Church was silent; but it was not dead, as we shall see very soon. In the words of Hermas, it will become green again like the willow; but its life was dormant, as it were, for a few years; many Christians doubtless left Rome, and the others hid themselves.

This oppression and terror weighed heavily on those around St. Paul; he who was so prodigal in his devotion, and surrounded hitherto with such faithful friends, felt himself alone for the first time: "All they who are in Asia, are turned away from me, of whom are Phigellus and Hermogenes"; Onesiphorus at least had consoled him and had not been ashamed of his chains; at Rome he had carefully sought him and had found him; <sup>6</sup> "The Lord give mercy to his house!" (i, 15-18).

Towards the end of the letter we get the same impression, but its tone is even more sad:

"Demas hath left me, loving this world, and is gone to Thessalonica; Crescens into Galatia, Titus into Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. . . . Alexander the coppersmith hath done me much evil; the Lord will reward him according to his works: whom do thou also avoid, for he hath greatly withstood our words. At my first answer, no man stood with me but all forsook me: may it not be laid to their charge. But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, that by me the preaching may be accomplished, and that all the Gentiles may hear; and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. The Lord hath delivered me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom" (iv, 10-18).

These eternal hopes are the only ones which henceforth support the Apostle; here below he expects nothing but death:

"I am even now ready to be sacrificed, and the time of my dissolution is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept faith. As to the rest, there is laid up for me a crown of justice, which the Lord the just judge will render to me in that day, and not only to me, but to them also that love his coming. Make haste to come to me quickly" (iv, 6-9).

<sup>6</sup> This feature reveals the great difference between the first captivity and the second: in the first, not only the whole Church, but all the prætorian guard knew Paul; now his most devoted helpers had difficulty in discovering his prison and joining him there.



*Paul's Death*

This letter, so full of sadness, hope, and affection, is the last which we have of St. Paul; the death which he awaited followed soon after, uniting him at Rome in the glory of martyrdom to him who had been at Jerusalem the first witness of his apostolate, St. Peter.<sup>7</sup>

*The Epistle to the Hebrews*

We cannot end this chapter without recalling a last echo of the Pauline theology in the Epistle to the Hebrews. This letter comes in our Bibles at the end of the Epistles of St. Paul, and certainly one cannot fail to recognise in it the thought of the Apostle. But on the other hand it displays a vocabulary and a style so different from his that it does not seem possible that Paul could have written it himself. Who was the actual writer? The early Fathers were unable to identify him;<sup>8</sup> we will make no attempt to do so ourselves.

For the rest, this literary problem is of only secondary importance; what is important is to recognise that this writing, inspired by God and received as such by the Church, reveals to us the thought of St. Paul.<sup>9</sup> To the speculations of an empty Gnosticism which dreamed of the glory of angels and failed to recognise the far

<sup>7</sup> It is impossible to determine exactly the date of the martyrdom of St. Paul. The succession of the facts as we have set them forth takes us to the end of the reign of Nero; Eusebius dates the death of St. Paul in the last year but one of Nero, i.e. in 67. This date is a very probable one, and is fairly generally accepted. Cf. Prat, *Saint Paul*, p. 194.

<sup>8</sup> Origen already wrote: "If I may give my own opinion, I would say that the thoughts are the thoughts of the Apostle, but the phraseology and the composition are of someone who is giving the teaching of the Apostle and, as it were, a scholar who is writing down the things said by the master. If therefore some church regards this epistle as Paul's, it is to be congratulated for this, for it is not by chance that the ancients have handed it down as being Paul's. But who drew up the letter? God knows the truth" (quoted by Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, VI, 25, 13-14). More than one exegete has identified this redactor with Barnabas, and this hypothesis is preferred by Prat (*Theology of St. Paul*, Vol. I, p. 360), but he gives it only as a hypothesis.

<sup>9</sup> This Pauline character of the epistle was strongly affirmed by the Greek Fathers, who were nevertheless aware of the differences of language and of expression between this letter and all the others. Cf. Prat, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 357. The Pauline character of Hebrews has been often established; let it suffice to mention the treatment in Prat, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 355-63, and our *History of the Doctrine of the Trinity*, Vol. I, pp. 332-43. It is certainly wrong to seek in Philonian thought the source of the theology of the epistle. Cf. *History of the Doctrine of the Trinity*, n. v, pp. 440 et seq.

higher glory of the Son of God, the Epistle to the Hebrews opposes the affirmation of His transcendental and truly divine glory:

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners, spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, last of all, in these days, hath spoken to us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the world. Who being the brightness of his glory, and the figure of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power, making purgation of sins, sitteth on the right hand of the majesty on high. Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath inherited a more excellent name than they. For to which of the angels hath he said at any time, 'Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee?' " (i, 1-5).

This transcendence of the Son above all creatures, and above the angels themselves, was the teaching which St. Paul had given to the Colossians, themselves menaced by Gnosticism;<sup>10</sup> and the Apostle showed them the Son "making peace through the blood of His cross, both as to the things that are on earth, and the things that are in heaven" (i, 20). Similarly in the Epistle to the Hebrews we have the "great high priest that hath passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God" (iv, 14). As high priest of eternal things, He has entered into the heavenly sanctuary, not with the blood of goats or of oxen, but with His own blood, assuring thus an eternal redemption (ix, 10-11); He is "the great pastor of the sheep, whom God raised again, covered with the blood of the eternal testament, our Lord Jesus Christ" (xiii, 20).<sup>11</sup> This new and eternal testament, which St. Paul delights to extol,<sup>12</sup> is described here with magnificence; it is indeed the theology of St. Paul; it no longer dazzles us by its brilliance, but it unfolds before us in wide paths of light.

Already at the end of the first century this high teaching was enshrined in Christian tradition; we shall find echoes of it in the letter of St. Clement.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 276.

<sup>11</sup> We are reminded of the words of the Lord at the Supper: "This chalice is the new testament in my blood" (I Cor. xi, 25).

<sup>12</sup> Rom. xi, 27. Cf. Prat, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 385-7.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Bk. II.

ST. PETER AND THE BEGINNINGS OF  
THE ROMAN CHURCH<sup>1</sup>

ST. PAUL was the great converter of the Gentiles to the new Christian faith: Asia Minor, Thrace, Macedonia, Greece, and as far as the boundaries of Illyricum were won to Christ through his efforts; he had also made the Gospel heard in Rome and doubtless even as far as Spain. But the Apostle to whose name his own is constantly joined because quite early they appeared together as the two heads of the infant Church, St. Peter, the leader of the apostolic college, played in the original development of the Christian Society a part which, although not so brilliant, was nevertheless of the first importance: it ended in the founding of the Roman See, which was to become the visible centre of the Church.

## § I. FROM JERUSALEM TO ROME

The history of Peter after his departure from Jerusalem is little known. Only a few episodes emerge into the light; here and there we have some likely hypotheses; but we arrive at certainty again at the end, which was undoubtedly in Rome.

*St. Peter at Antioch*

The stay of St. Peter at Antioch after the Council of Jerusalem is beyond question. It was marked by an incident of great importance and consequence for the future of the relations between Judaism

<sup>1</sup> Bibliography.—We shall indicate in the course of the chapter, as they are utilised, the early Scriptural or Patristic sources, and the archæological data which give us information on the apostolic life of St. Peter and his final arrival in Rome. On this matter, the literature is abundant. The last upholder of the thesis, now almost universally abandoned, which rejects the Roman apostolate of St. Peter, is M. Charles Guignebert, whose works are also mentioned in the notes. The most important work in the contrary sense is that of Lietzmann, also mentioned in the course of the chapter. An excellent setting forth of the question, with illustrations from archæological monuments, will be found in Mgr. M. Besson's *Saint Pierre et les origines de la primauté romaine*, Geneva, 1928. (To the above may be added the works of the late Mgr. A. S. Barnes, and especially *St. Peter in Rome*.—Tr.)

and Christianity, but of less importance, apparently, for the history of the relations between Peter and Paul, who then met and were momentarily in opposition, than some have been tempted to suggest. St. Paul had not felt it possible to accept the kind of inferior place to which the attitude of the one who possessed the highest authority in the apostolic college seemed to relegate the Gentiles, and he had resisted Peter to the face. He had evidently won his point, for the passage in the Epistle to the Galatians<sup>2</sup> in which Paul gives an account of the incident does not allow one to suppose that it ended otherwise than in the acceptance by St. Peter of his point of view. But it has for us the great interest of showing at once the very special place held by Peter in the Christian community, since his attitude was of such importance in the eyes of Paul, and also the spirit which animated Peter at this period in the history of the infant Church, in which were being manifested tendencies which were distinct, if not divergent, and which time alone could bring together. The Jewish Christians, who had at least some difficulty in agreeing to the complete emancipation of Christianity from Judaism, and for whom the external observances still retained their ancient value, invoked James, the brother of the Lord; Paul represented the opposite tendency, resolutely in favour of emancipation. Peter, who, as is shown by the part he took in the admission of the first Gentiles to baptism and by the very reproaches of Paul set forth in the Epistle to the Galatians, was fundamentally of the same opinion, endeavoured to bring about a conciliation which was sometimes very difficult: the affair at Antioch showed that a moment had to come when it would be necessary to take sides. The spread of Christianity throughout the whole Roman world, and the progressive effacement of the element of Jewish origin in the Church, brought about very soon the success of the movement for freedom.

### *St. Peter in the Provinces of Asia Minor and in Macedonia*

But it has been asked<sup>3</sup> whether the Epistle to the Galatians bears witness, not only to the coming of Peter to Antioch, but also to the existence there of a party inclined to strictness which boasted of Peter, and which the epistle aimed at combating. That the epistle

<sup>2</sup> Cf. above, pp. 214-16.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. H. Lietzmann, *Zwei Notizen zu Paulus*, in *Sitzungsberichte der preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, Vols. VI-VIII, 1930, pp. 151-6.

attacks those holding a less broad solution of the question which had arisen between Judaisers and Christians of Gentile origin is quite evident; but that there was in Galatia a "party of Peter" is a conjecture which finds no support elsewhere. On the other hand, an indication, at least, that Peter went into Pontus, Bithynia, Cappadocia and Macedonia, as stated by Origen in words transmitted to us by Eusebius,<sup>4</sup> may be found in the fact that the first epistle of the Apostle was addressed to the faithful in these provinces. Even if this address was not his own work, it would bear witness to a very ancient tradition linking Peter with these lands.

### *St. Peter in Corinth*

Still more sure is the presence of Peter at Corinth. The well-known phrase in the first Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians (i, 12): "I am of Paul; and I am of Apollo; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ," reveals that in the church in this city there were divisions, superficial perhaps rather than deep, which owed their beginning to the influence on the spot of the persons who are named, though they themselves may not have been responsible. Thus Paul himself is the first to protest against those who thus boast of himself. Hence we have good reason to think that, at the date when this epistle was written, about A.D. 57, Peter had already visited Corinth. In any case it would be difficult to doubt his visit, seeing that the legitimate inference suggested by the Epistle of St. Paul is corroborated by Dionysius, Bishop of Corinth, who towards the middle of the second century writes formally that his church owes its foundation to the Apostles Peter and Paul.<sup>5</sup> Further, Corinth was on one of the routes which Peter must have taken from Antioch to Rome, though we do not know any other stages. In any case we do not know what Peter did at Corinth. To infer from the passage of St. Paul just quoted that he had favoured a party of Judaisers there would be to derive from the text much more than would be allowable.

## § 2. THE COMING OF ST. PETER TO ROME

### *Hypotheses and Certainties*

The same must be said of the hypothesis according to which the Epistle of Paul to the Romans, belonging to the same period as

<sup>4</sup> *Historica ecclesiastica*, III, 1.

<sup>5</sup> *Epist. ad Roman.*, quoted by Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.*, II, 25, 8.

the first to the Corinthians, indicates a warning by Paul to the Romans against a Judaizing activity on the part of Peter.<sup>1</sup> The actions and doings of Peter at Rome remain unknown to us. Two things only are certain: he went there, and after governing the Roman church he ended his apostolic life by being martyred there under Nero. As to the time of his arrival, we are reduced to conjectures. Still, the fact itself of the coming of Peter to Rome must be thoroughly established, seeing that it has been contested; these denials arose at the time of the Reformation through Protestant controversy against the Roman primacy, and have never since ceased; but we must at once add that the number of critics, even amongst those most opposed to Catholicism, who uphold this view grows ever less.<sup>2</sup>

### *Literary Testimonies*

One of their main arguments consists in the affirmation that the tradition concerning the Roman stay of Peter depends on apocryphal works put in circulation in the second and third centuries, beginning with the legend of Simon Magus. But the mention of the presence of St. Peter in Rome in a certain number of apocryphal writings does not necessarily make this presence itself legendary; it proves merely that this sojourn of Peter was believed in at the time when these writings were composed. Besides, and this is the essential point, are there not other texts besides the apocryphal ones, or those which depend on them, which witness to Peter? Certainly there are such texts; they are numerous, and several go back to a time incontestably earlier than that of the apocryphal works.

Before quoting them, we must also point out that when in the second or third centuries there were conflicts affecting the Roman authority, no one ever put forth any doubt as to the apostolate, martyrdom, and burial of Peter at Rome. At that time it was the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. H. Lietzmann, art. mentioned above, p. 285, n. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. H. Lietzmann, *Petrus und Paulus in Rom. Liturgische und archäologische Studien*, Berlin and Leipzig, 2nd edn., 1927. The latest denial worth mentioning of the coming of St. Peter to Rome is, in France, Ch. Guignebert, *La primauté de Pierre et la venue de Pierre à Rome*, Paris, 1909. P. Monceaux, *L'apostolat de Pierre à Rome*, in *Revue d'histoire et de littérature religieuses*, 1910, pp. 216-40, has written a critique of this work which has remained without serious reply. The *War Petrus in Rom.*, by K. Heussi (Gotha, 1936), is categorical rather than convincing in its negations.

general belief that Peter and Paul had their tombs at Rome, Peter on the Vatican Hill, Paul on the Ostian Way: this is stated, in terms hardly capable of a different interpretation, by the Roman cleric Gaius, a contemporary of Pope Zephyrinus (199-217), for he says that in these two places there are the "trophies" of the apostles. Eusebius, to whom we are indebted for this quotation,<sup>3</sup> does not seem to have thought for a moment that the "trophies" could mean anything other than their relics, or *memoriæ*.<sup>4</sup>

This belief is echoed by the episcopal lists of the Roman Church, which give the names of the first Roman bishops: the list called Liberian because it dates back to Pope Liberius in the fourth century but which is based on annals drawn up in 235 by the Roman priest Hippolytus; and the catalogue of Hegesippus, belonging to the second half of the second century.

In this same second half of the second century, about 180, the Bishop of Lyons, St. Irenæus,<sup>5</sup> one of the men of the time who was best acquainted with ecclesiastical traditions, is quite as definite in affirming the foundation of the Roman Church by the blessed Apostles Peter and Paul. In 170, Bishop Dionysius of Corinth, in the passage already quoted on the beginnings of his own church,<sup>6</sup> does not fail when addressing the Romans to remind them that they had the same founders.

We can go back further still, to the first half of the second century. The *Explanation of the Words of the Lord* made by the Asiatic bishop Papias of Hierapolis who had known personally some direct disciples of the Apostles, says that St. Mark summarised, in his gospel composed at Rome, the preaching of St. Peter in that city.<sup>7</sup>

We go a step further back, to St. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch,

<sup>3</sup> *Historia Ecclesiastica*, II, 25, 5-7.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. P. Monceaux, *loc. cit.*, M. Guignebert (*La sépulture de Pierre*, in *Revue historique*, 1931) still tries to set aside this interpretation. But he does not seem to bring forward any positive argument in favour of his wholly personal view, which is on the contrary clearly weakened by an African inscription, that of the virgin martyrs of Thabarka, where the word "tropæa" undeniably means the relics of the saints, and by extension, their tombs; cf. P. Monceaux, *Enquête sur l'épigraphie chrétienne d'Afrique*, in *Mémoires présentés par divers savants étrangers à l'Académie des inscriptions*, Vol. LXXXVIII, part I, 1908, pp. 161-339, no. 260.

<sup>5</sup> *Contra hæreses*, III, 3, 3.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. p. 286, n. 5.

<sup>7</sup> Quoted by Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, III, 39, 15.

martyred at Rome under Trajan A.D. 107. Writing to the Christians of the capital of the Empire, he says that it is not for him to give them orders like Peter and Paul (*Rom.* iv, 3). Certainly the affirmation of the Roman sojourn of the Apostles is not so explicit here, but the phrase would have little meaning if it did not presuppose it. The stay of Paul, established by the Acts, cannot be called into question; does not the association of Peter with him in all the preceding texts give to the argument the crowning force which might otherwise possibly be lacking to critical minds?

Lastly, going back before the year 100, and returning to Rome itself after having gone round the Christian world, we come about the year 95 to the testimony of St. Clement, the third successor of Peter, who must have known him personally. In a celebrated letter addressed to the Christians of Corinth in the name of the Church of Rome, which appears there already as a church whose word has a special authority, Clement recalls the martyrdom of Peter and Paul, and adds: "To these men, whose life was holy, there is joined a great multitude of elect ones who, in the midst of numerous tortures inflicted for their zeal, gave *amongst us* a magnificent example."<sup>8</sup> Would it be possible to state much more explicitly that Peter and Paul were martyred at Rome?

There is just one earlier statement<sup>9</sup> in favour of the Roman sojourn of Peter: his own, in his first epistle, written from Babylon, the symbolical name for Pagan Rome which we find also in the Apocalypse<sup>10</sup> and again elsewhere.<sup>11</sup> We need not give serious consideration here to the hypothesis, set forth by some writers nevertheless,<sup>12</sup> that Babylon here means the town of that name in Chaldæa, for this was then depopulated and decayed, and scarcely

<sup>8</sup> St. Clement, *Epistle to the Corinthians*, 5-6.

<sup>9</sup> We might also add to that of St. Clement the evidence furnished by the apocryphal work known as the *Ascension of Isaïas*, which is anterior to the end of the first century. This speaks of a certain Beliar, who seized one of the Twelve. If Beliar is none other than Nero, as commentators agree, we do not see what Apostle other than Peter could be referred to, and his presence at Rome at the time to the Neronian persecution thus receives a supplementary confirmation. Cf. *Ascensio Isaïae*, IV, 3, edited by Tisserant, in *Documents pour servir à l'histoire de la Bible*, published under the direction of F. Martin, Paris, 1909, pp. 116-17.

<sup>10</sup> xvi-xviii.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. St. Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, XVIII, 2, n. 29.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. C. Guignebert, *La primauté de Pierre* (mentioned above, p. 287, n. 2), p. 182.



likely to attract St. Peter, whose name, in point of fact, is completely absent from the Christian traditions of those parts.<sup>13</sup> The Babylon in Egypt is equally unlikely.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, tradition, which is echoed by Eusebius,<sup>15</sup> places the composition of the epistle at Rome. But was it really written by Peter himself? Some critics like Harnack<sup>16</sup> have denied this, because they find in it a Pauline tone. But is not this suspicion inspired after all by the systematic conception of the permanent opposition between the two Apostles? The recollection, mentioned by Eusebius,<sup>17</sup> of the utilisation of the epistle by Papias, on the other hand, makes the ascription to Peter very probable. Some who have denied the Petrine authorship have put forward the name of Barnabas, which would again support the Roman sojourn of Peter by an apostolic witness of the first order. In any case, the critics in determining the date of this letter scarcely go beyond the period between the year 43 and the commencement of the second century.<sup>18</sup> Were it not Peter's, either directly or indirectly, the fact that its redactor in presenting it as Peter's puts it forth as written at Rome would retain its great weight.

### *Archæological Testimony*

All written tradition, going back to the Apostolic period or its immediate neighbourhood, testifies therefore in favour of the historic reality of the presence in Rome of St. Peter, whose name is at the head of all the Roman episcopal lists, while no claim advanced by any other see opposes it.

<sup>13</sup> When Persia claims an Apostle as founder of its churches it is Thaddæus, or Bartholomew, or Thomas, but never Peter. Cf. Cosmas Indicopleustes (Migne, P.G., LXXXVIII, 113), and Vol. II.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. E. Smothers, *A Letter from Babylon*, in *Classical Journal*, Vol. XXII, 1926, pp. 202-9.

<sup>15</sup> *Historia Ecclesiastica*, II, 15, 2.

<sup>16</sup> *Die Chronologie der altchristlichen Litteratur*, Vol. I, Leipzig, 1897, p. 164, and Vol. II, Leipzig, 1904, pp. 455 *et seq.*

<sup>17</sup> *Historia Ecclesiastica*, III, 39, 17.

<sup>18</sup> The allusions in the epistle (iv, 12 *et seq.*) to the sufferings undergone by the faithful, and the threats against them, may refer to the persecution of 64. On this has been based an argument against the Petrine authenticity of the letter, for this persecution ended the Apostle's life. But there is no proof that between the first manifestation of the danger and the execution of Peter there was not time sufficient to enable him to write to far-off churches still dear to his heart. We must add, moreover, that the allusion to persecution is fairly general, and has not necessarily a precise historic signification.

Archæology confirms this testimony. An inscription called that of the *Platonia*,<sup>19</sup> composed by Pope St. Damasus towards the end of the fourth century in the catacomb of St. Sebastian on the Appian Way a short distance from the walls of Rome, recalls that St. Peter and St. Paul "dwelt" there,<sup>20</sup> and a *graffita*, an inscription written by hand by a visitor in the fourth or fifth century, also mentions in this place the *Domus Petri*.<sup>21</sup> Thus we have two local references, either to a sojourn of Peter himself during his life, or else of his body after his death.

The second hypothesis is supported by the indication in ancient itineraries,<sup>22</sup> which say that the burial places of the Apostles were for a time at the catacomb, and by *graffiti* which show that the faithful gathered often at St. Sebastian's to celebrate the *refrigerium* or funeral *agape* in their honour.<sup>23</sup> A feast of the Apostles Peter and Paul mentioned in two martyrological documents, the *Depositio martyrum* of the *Chronograph* of 354 and the *Hieronymian Martyrology*, which, indeed, seems to connect the institution with the year 258,<sup>24</sup> suggests an explanation of this transference to St. Sebastian of the body of Peter, who, according to the testimony—later, it is true—of the *Liber Pontificalis*,<sup>25</sup> had been first buried at the Vatican, where it was then replaced permanently.

This year 258 was that of one of the most terrible persecutions which ever ravaged the Church, that of Valerian. Would not the Roman Christians have decided to put beyond the reach of possible profanation or destruction the remains of their first bishop, and those of St. Paul, by giving them a home which they thought safer, in another cemetery far from the city, which seemed to them to be better protected?<sup>26</sup> Or, more simply, if these profanations were

<sup>19</sup> Corruption of *platona*, or rather *platonum*, a marble plaque.

<sup>20</sup> St. Damasus, *Epigrammata*, 26 (Edit. Leipzig, 1895; p. 26; Migne, P.L., XIII, 382).

<sup>21</sup> Cf. J. Wilpert, *Domus Petri*, in *Römische Quartalschrift*, 1912, pp. 117-22; A. de Waal, *Zur Wilpert's Domus Petri*, in *ibid.*, pp. 123-32.

<sup>22</sup> *Notitia ecclesiarum*, in J. B. de Rossi, *Roma Sotterranea*, Vol. I, pp. 139 and 141.

<sup>23</sup> At the *triclinia*, a meeting-place close to the tomb.

<sup>24</sup> III Kal (endas) jul (ias) . . . Tusco et Basso consulibus. The feast in question is therefore that of June 29th.

<sup>25</sup> Duchesne's edn., Vol. I, p. 118.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. the account by Mgr. L. Duchesne, *La Memoria Apostolorum de la via Appia*, in *Atti della Pontificia Accademia romana di archeologia, Memorie*, I, 1, 1913 (*Miscellanea de Rossi*), p. 7. To this dating and explanation of the sojourn of the relics of SS. Peter and Paul in the catacomb of St. Sebastian it has been

not really to be feared, would they not at least want to make certain thereby that it would still be possible to visit bodies of saints, which otherwise they could no longer honour, because of the guard placed by the Imperial authority at the burial places known as Christian?<sup>27</sup> In any case, this provisional transportation seems

objected that such a transportation of the bodies, above all at the precise period of hostilities against the Christians, would not have been able to escape the notice of the authorities, and would moreover have been useless, inasmuch as the catacombs and the Christian use of them was in no wise unknown to them. Thus P. Delehay (*Le sanctuaire des apôtres sur la voie Appienne*, in *Analecta Bolandiana*, XLV, 1927, pp. 297-306) thinks that the *domus Petri* designates the residence of Peter when alive, and not his tomb, and he has no difficulty in showing that the martyrs were honoured more than once by religious monuments erected in places which were not their tombs, and notably in the places where they lived. But in this case how could we explain the celebration of the *refrigerium*, a funeral rite, at St. Sebastian? Perhaps it will be said that St. Sebastian's may have been the first burial-place of the Apostles. This has been maintained by, amongst others, K. Erbes, *Die geschichtlichen Verhältnisse der Apostelgräber in Rom*, in *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, Vol. XLIII, 1934, pp. 38-92. The reference in the *Liber pontificalis* to the Vatican burial would not be decisive in a contrary sense, in view of its late date. But it is the condition of the places which causes difficulty, for the monuments of the first two centuries found in the cemetery of St. Sebastian are solely pagan. But if we accept the remarkably ingenious conclusions of M. Carcopino, *Lézingen en Voordrachten*, in *Bulletin van de Vereeniging tot Bevordering der Kennis van de Antieke Beschaving*, 1932, pp. 33-4, we may find the solution of the mystery: the second century tombs are those of followers of Gnostic sects, and the inscriptions mention amongst them numerous slaves and freedmen of the emperor. Now, though the Church warmly opposed Gnosticism, which was a complete deformation of the Christian religion rather than a heresy, the common threat to both in the form of the renewal of the Imperial strictures may have brought together Christians and Gnostics in measures of common defence, and it is not impossible that the Christians may have accepted, not indeed Gnostic hospitality, even momentarily, but their proximity, in order to safeguard their precious relics in land which seemed to be more likely to be free from police investigation because its owners or users were men well known at court.

<sup>27</sup> The explanation given above of the cult of the Apostles at the catacomb of St. Sebastian has indeed been opposed by other arguments: the respect of the Romans for burial places, and the severity of their laws in this matter, a new example of which has recently been found in the famous Nazareth inscription (F. Cumont, *Un rescrit impérial sur la violation de sépulture*, in *Revue historique*, Vol. CLXIII, 1930, pp. 241-66), was so great that the remains of the Apostles cannot have appeared to be in danger in their original tombs. This severity would on the contrary make it very dangerous to attempt to transfer them elsewhere, and the attempt would scarcely have escaped the notice of the police. In any case, the transfer would have been useless, as it would soon have become known. But to this we can reply that the Roman police, like that of most modern countries, were not incorruptible—the acts of the martyrs give many proofs of the contrary—and further, bodies interred already for two centuries must have been reduced to very little, and the transfer, not of heavy sarcophagi, but of two little boxes containing a few bones, could have taken place without attracting attention.

certain. The two bodies remained *ad Catacumbas* until the day when, after the definitive peace given to the Church by the Emperor Constantine, the latter had them taken back to their original tombs, in the Vatican for the one, and on the Ostian Way for the other, and over them were soon built great basilicas.

In any case, the discoveries made in the catacomb of St. Sebastian have, so to speak, given palpable proof of the reality of the presence in Rome of the bodies of St. Peter and St. Paul. And as there exists not even the shadow of an indication that they had been brought there from elsewhere, this presence, authenticated in this way by irrefragable material witnesses, is yet another proof that both Apostles ended their lives there.<sup>23</sup>

### § 3. ST. PETER'S RESIDENCE IN ROME

#### *Duration of Peter's Stay in Rome*

How long had St. Peter lived in Rome before his martyrdom? Here we must confess an almost complete ignorance. The so-called tradition of the twenty-five years of Peter's Roman episcopate rests on no historic data.<sup>1</sup> In any case, the Apostle could not have dwelt in the capital of the Empire continuously for twenty-five years, since his presence at the Council at Jerusalem which dis-

<sup>28</sup> One of the most recent historians of the commencement of the Roman Church, inspired certainly by no religious prejudice, H. Lietzmann, ends his study on the coming of St. Peter to Rome (*Petrus und Paulus in Rom*, p. 238), by these words: "To sum up, all the early sources about the year 100, become clear and easily understandable, agree with their historic context, and with each other, if we accept what they clearly suggest to us, namely, that Peter sojourned in Rome and died a martyr there. Any other hypothesis on Peter's death heaps difficulty upon difficulty, and cannot be supported by a single document. I cannot understand how, in face of this state of things, there can be any hesitation in accepting the conclusion."

<sup>1</sup> This tradition may have originated in a confusion. One of the earliest ecclesiastical chronologies, that of Hippolytus, sets forth the two persons generally regarded as the first two successors of St. Peter, St. Linus and St. Anacletus, as having already governed the Roman Church during Peter's lifetime and under his authority, and on the other hand it attributes to each an episcopate of twelve years; St. Clement, who comes next, is called the successor of St. Peter in this chronology, and thus we get the twenty-five years of Peter's episcopate. Cf. *Liber Pontificalis*, I, p. 118 (Duchesne's edn.), which adopts the tradition of the episcopates of Linus and Anacletus as having been contemporary with that of St. Peter. E. Caspar, *Die älteste römische Bischofsliste*, in *Schriften der Königsberger gelehrten Gesellschaft, Geisteswissenschaftliche Klasse*, 2 Jahr, Heft 4, 1926, has defended this explanation.

cussed the case of Gentile converts to the Christian faith <sup>2</sup> coincided with the year 49, and shortly afterwards, on the occasion of his disagreement with St. Paul, he was at Antioch, and lastly, neither the letter written by Paul to the Romans in 58, or the account in the Acts of the captivity in Rome (61-62) contain the slightest allusion to the presence of Peter there. On the other hand, the supposed meeting between the Apostle and Simon Magus in Rome at the beginning of the reign of Claudius (41-54) is related only by late authors whose historical accuracy is not beyond question.<sup>3</sup>

If, on the other side, we note that "when St. Paul wrote to the Romans, their Church was strong and flourishing," that in his eyes it must have had "a particular importance, since it was to her that he addressed his great doctrinal manifesto on predestination," we are constrained to ask if a Christian community which had already those characteristics could have been constituted, if not originated, "apart from the influence of an apostle."<sup>4</sup> As the Apostle could certainly not be St. Paul, who says expressly in his Epistle in the year 58 that he had not been able till then to go to Rome, it would seem admissible that Peter may have made a previous journey to Rome, before definitely fixing his residence there. But the proof of this point is lacking, and still less could we affirm that this first visit, which remains conjectural, took place twenty-five years before his death.

Moreover, the manner of reckoning the twenty-five years varies with the writers who have transmitted this estimate to us. The Liberian Catalogue makes Peter go already in the year 30, under

<sup>2</sup> Cf. above, p. 207 *et seq.*

<sup>3</sup> It is the historian Eusebius who, in the fourth century, relates in his *Historia ecclesiastica*, I, 14, not indeed expressly that Peter met Simon Magus in Rome, but that his preaching there put an end to the success of the magician. He refers here to the second century apologist, Justin, according to whom (*Apology*, 26) Simon was honoured at Rome as a god: he adds that a statue was erected to him in the island in the Tiber, with the inscription *Simoni Deo sancto* (C.I.L., VI, 567-8). In point of fact, in this island of the Tiber there has been discovered a vase bearing the words *Semoni Sanco Deo*, i.e. "To the god Simo Sancus," an Etruscan divinity. The confusion is evident, and the whole story of the visit of Simon Magus to Rome may be baseless. True, there is also an allusion to it in the *Acts of Peter*, but this third-century work is a romance which is, if not of Gnostic origin, at least open to suspicion, and while it may have retained the trace of exact facts, it certainly could not itself guarantee their reality.

<sup>4</sup> M. Besson, *Saint Pierre et les origines de la primauté romaine*, Geneva, 1928, p. 66.

Tiberius, to Rome, and die there in 55. The impossibility of this chronology is evident: it is equivalent to saying that Peter went to Rome the day after the Passion, and that he perished there some time before the persecution started by Nero. Eusebius more reasonably puts the arrival of Peter in Rome in 42 and his martyrdom in 67. But the year 67 seems late, for the wholesale slaughter of Christians in Rome under Nero's orders took place in 64. Perhaps the poet Lactantius, who wrote at the beginning of the fourth century, is echoing a tradition more in harmony with the truth when he writes thus of the Apostles in *De mortibus persecutorum*:<sup>5</sup> "They scattered through the earth to preach the Gospel, and during twenty-five years, until the beginning of the reign of Nero, they laid the foundations of the Church throughout the provinces and cities. Nero was already in power when Peter came to Rome." Here the twenty-five years of Peter's Apostolic activity no longer refer to the time of his Roman residence, but only mark its end.

### *The Beginnings of the Roman Church*

In any case, when Peter arrived at Rome for this last visit, he undoubtedly found a Church there. Even if we accept the hypothesis of a very early visit by St. Peter to Rome, and that he then organised the Church there, it would still be natural to trace the origin of the Roman Church to the "Romans" who were at Jerusalem for Pentecost, and thus the Church there would have originated before St. Peter's arrival. It would seem to have begun, doubtless very humbly, under Tiberius, and to have acquired a little more importance in the reigns of Caligula and Claudius.

Under the latter, about 49, it experienced a first crisis, which already gives us some idea of its progress: the Christians were sufficiently numerous or strong to bring about in the Jewish colony in Rome, as in so many other places, disturbances which led to the intervention of authority; the Jews, or, at any rate, some Jews, and, of course, with them, the Christians, who were not yet distinguished from them, were expelled from the capital. Such is the sense, impossible to call in doubt, of the well-known passage in Suetonius: *Judeos impulsore Chresto assidue tumultuantes Roma*

<sup>5</sup> *De mortibus persecutorum*, II.

*expulit.*<sup>6</sup> *Chrestus*<sup>7</sup> is Christ, whom Suetonius, whose information is rather vague, regards as the head of one of the opposing parties. Another pagan witness long neglected, namely Thallus,<sup>8</sup> confirms the penetration of Christian ideas in Roman circles at this time.

The Acts of the Apostles, which tell (xviii, 2) of Christians, Aquila and Priscilla, obliged to leave Rome, and in consequence, being found at Corinth when St. Paul went there about 51 or 52, agrees perfectly with the statement in Suetonius. Dio Cassius<sup>9</sup> certainly says—and with great likelihood—that the general expulsion of the Jews turned out to be difficult to carry through, and that it ended in a prohibition of assemblies. But the example of Aquila and Priscilla shows that there were at least a certain number of expulsions. The truth would seem to be that the measures taken affected those Jews who had become Christians.<sup>10</sup> If Peter was already then in Rome, he must have been amongst those expelled.

These measures did not prevent the little group from being reconstituted and increasing, and when St. Paul a few years later, in 57 at the latest, wrote his Epistle to them,<sup>11</sup> the primitive

<sup>6</sup> Suetonius, *Claudius*, XXV, 4.

<sup>7</sup> A common confusion of *Χρηστός* with *Χριστός*. The Roman populace called the Christians *chrestiani*, as is shown also by the passage in Tacitus concerning the Neronian persecution, *Annales*, XV, 44. On the evolution of the name, cf. P. de Labriolle, *Christianus*, in *Bulletin Du Cange*, Vol. V, 1929-30, pp. 69-88.

<sup>8</sup> Transmitted in a fragment of Julius Africanus conserved by the Byzantine chronicler George Syncellus (*Fragmenta historicorum graecorum*, ed. Carl Muller, Vol. III, p. 519). Cf. M. Goguel, *Un nouveau témoignage non chrétien sur la tradition évangélique*, in *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, Vol. XCVIII, 1928, pp. 1-12.

<sup>9</sup> LX, 6.

<sup>10</sup> This, moreover, may be the precise sense of the phrase of Suetonius: "He expelled from Rome the Jews who (i.e. those of the Jews who), led by Christ, were the cause of continual agitations." It has been suggested that a letter of Claudius to the Alexandrians, known by a papyrus threatening in 41 severe penalties against the Jews who invited or received in the Egyptian capital co-religionists from the remainder of the province or from Syria, mentions Christians, describing them as "an evil which is spreading through the whole world." But in spite of the ingenious comparisons of H. Janne (*Un passage controversé de la lettre de Claude aux Alexandrins*, in *Revue archéologique*, series 5, Vol. XXXV, 1932, pp. 268-82), the terms used are too vague to justify such a conclusion, the weakness of which has been well set forth by W. Seston (*L'empereur Claude et les chrétiens*, in *Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses*, May-June, 1931, pp. 275-304). He also gives a copious bibliography on the question. The text of the letter is given in H. Idriss Bell, *Jews and Christians in Egypt, the Jewish Troubles in Alexandria and the Athanasian Controversy*, London and Oxford, 1922. A French commentary on the letter by P. Jouguet is in *Journal des Savants*, 1925, pp. 5-19.

<sup>11</sup> On this date, cf. above, p. 259.

Roman Church was already "numerous, well known, and celebrated for its faith and its works."<sup>12</sup> We can also gather from this same letter of Paul the nature of the elements which composed it: as in most other cities, there had been added to the original Jewish nucleus an already fairly large number of converted pagans; these represented the future. But for a fairly long time the oriental element must have prevailed over the strictly Roman element; Greek remained, in fact, the official language of the Roman Church down to the end of the second century, doubtless because it was the language of the majority of its members.

Shortly afterwards, Paul, accused before the Imperial tribunal, himself landed in Italy: Christians welcomed him at Puteoli, a fact which constitutes a valuable testimony to at least a beginning of the spread of Christianity in the old *Magna Græcia*, and Christians from Rome came to meet him on the Appian Way (*Acts* xxviii, 15).

When he arrived in Rome as a prisoner enjoying a certain amount of freedom,<sup>13</sup> Paul conferred with the leaders of the Jewish colony, and put his case before them. They replied, as he had evidently hoped, by questioning him on the subject of his preaching, and he proceeded to explain this. His audience was divided. Some were against him, and these would seem to have formed the majority, in view of the words on the hardness of heart of the Jewish people which come almost at the end of the Book of Acts (xxviii *in fine*). Nevertheless, the Roman Church was enriched by a new contingent of converts from Judaism. Perhaps these increased still more during the two years of captivity, which Paul's zeal could not allow to be fruitless. But his Judaising opponents also came, as we gather from his letter to the Philippians, and the young Church experienced some disturbances in consequence; nevertheless, they do not seem to have been very serious, as we gather from Paul's own words.<sup>14</sup>

Released or declared not guilty, and set at liberty, Paul, who seems then to have gone on to Spain,<sup>15</sup> disappears from the Roman scene. But he was replaced there by St. Peter, who arrived perhaps

<sup>12</sup> L. Duchesne, *Histoire ancienne de l'Eglise*, Vol. I, p. 56.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. p. 274.

<sup>14</sup> "So that by all means, whether by occasion or by truth, Christ be preached; in this also I rejoice, yea, and will rejoice" (*Phil.* i, 18).

<sup>15</sup> According to the letter of St. Clement, on which see Bk. II, and above, p. 235.



before his departure. But the obscurity which surrounds the history of the prince of the Apostles during the previous years continues still, for we know nothing of his Roman sojourn except the martyrdom which crowned it. Vague traditions concerning the place where he baptised *ad nymphas sancti Petri, umi Petrus baptizabat*,<sup>16</sup> which would seem to have been the Ostrian cemetery on the Via Nomentana just outside Rome, do not go sufficiently far back (fourth century) to inspire full confidence. They are not to be set aside altogether.<sup>17</sup> But of Peter's life in Rome we know for certain only the last act, his martyrdom. But this, combined with that of St. Paul, suffices to make the Roman Church the Apostolic Church *par excellence*.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. A. Profumo, *La memoria di san Pietro nella regione Salaria-Nomentana*, in *Römische Quartalschrift*, 1916, supplement 21.

<sup>17</sup> The *Acta Marcelli*, which contain them, are fourth century. This tradition concerning the Ostrian cemetery would be against that of the Catacomb of St. Sebastian, if the *Domus Petri* designates the residence of St. Peter during his lifetime. Cf. above, p. 291, n. 26.

ST. JAMES AND ST. JOHN <sup>1</sup>§ I. ST. JAMES AND THE CHURCH AT  
JERUSALEM*St. James*

THE story of the beginnings of the Church of Jerusalem and of the missions of St. Paul has already brought before us the figure of St. James, the Lord's brother. In St. Paul's enumeration of the appearances of the risen Christ, he mentions, after those to Cephas, the eleven, and the five hundred, an appearance to James (I *Cor.* xv, 7). Recalling to the Galatians the memories of his first years of Christian life, he tells them that three years after his conversion he went up to Jerusalem to see Peter; he adds: "Other of the apostles I saw none, saving James the brother of the Lord" (*Gal.* i, 19). These are only brief references, but they show the prominent place which James occupied in the Church from the first.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bibliography.—J. Chaîne, *L'épître de saint Jacques*, Paris, 1927; M. J. Lagrange, *Évangile selon saint Jean*, Paris, 1925; E. B. Allo, *Saint Jean, L'Apocalypse*, Paris, 1933; C. Fouard, *St. John and the End of the Apostolic Age*; L. Pirot, *Saint Jean*, Paris, 1923; G. H. Rendall, *The Epistle of St. James and Judaic Christianity*, Cambridge, 1927; V. H. Stanton, *The Gospels as historical documents*, Part III, *The Fourth Gospel*, Cambridge, 1920; B. F. Westcott, *The Epistles of St. John*, London, 1905.

<sup>2</sup> Was James one of the Twelve? The question has been discussed for centuries. As Tillemont points out, the Greeks distinguish James of Alphæus, who was one of the Twelve, from James, the brother of the Lord; their liturgy has two feasts, and two legends; the Latins, on the contrary, have followed the opinion of St. Jerome and identify the two. In favour of the identification, see Lagrange, *Saint Marc*, pp. 78 *et seq.*; *Épître aux Galates*, p. 18; Chaîne, *Épître de saint Jacques*, pp. xxx-xxxiii; in favour of the distinction, see Malvy, in *Recherches de Science Religieuse*, 1918, pp. 122-32; Mader, in *Biblische Zeitschrift*, Vol. VI, 4, pp. 393-406. What *John* vii, 5 (cf. *Mark* iii, 21) says of the incredulity of the brethren of the Lord six months only before the Passion is a difficulty for those exegetes who count amongst the Twelve not only James, but also two other brethren of the Lord, Simon and Jude (Chaîne, *op. cit.*, p. xxxii). On the other hand, the text in *Gal.* i, 19, quoted above, is explained more naturally if we regard James as one of the Apostles. To harmonise these data, various hypotheses have been suggested: the appearance of Jesus to James made an Apostle of him, like the appearance to Paul; or else, in order to replace James the son of Zebedee, who was martyred in 42, James the Lord's brother was called into the apostolic college; in this way the group of three, Peter, James and John,

From the time of the persecution by Agrippa, his authority increased; James, the brother of John, died a martyr; Peter was thrown into prison, delivered by an angel, and then left Jerusalem. James, the brother of the Lord, appears from that time on as the head of the community; it was he, indeed, that Peter informed of his deliverance (*Acts* xii, 17). He played a decisive part in the Council of Jerusalem: those who, according to Paul's story, were regarded as "pillars," were James, Cephas and John (*Gal.* ii, 9); at the general assembly described in the Acts, two speeches were made, one by Peter, and the other by James (xv, 13). When Paul arrived at Jerusalem, he went to see James, who was surrounded by presbyters (*Acts* xxi, 18).

All these facts, and, above all, the last mentioned, indicate that James was the head of the Church of Jerusalem; whereas the other Apostles were missionaries carrying the Gospel beyond Judea and founding churches, James resided at Jerusalem, and was bishop there.<sup>3</sup>

### *The Bishop of Jerusalem*

This exceptional position of St. James must not be lost sight of. It shows the attachment of the Apostles to the holy city, and the efforts they made for its conversion: the greater metropolises of the East, Antioch, Thessalonica, Corinth, Ephesus, did not keep St. Paul for more than two or three years; Peter must similarly have passed through Antioch, Corinth, and apparently Bithynia and Pontus; at Rome he probably made several stays, leaving it for some far-off mission before returning and dying there.<sup>4</sup> James remained always at Jerusalem; no mission could draw him from the holy city; he knew that the great catastrophe was nigh; he saw how conversions were increasing, and he redoubled his efforts to bring back Israel to the Messiah it had despised and crucified. He rejoiced to hear the account of the victories of Paul (*Acts* xxi, 20); his own successes were the "many thousands among the Jews that have believed, all zealous for the Law" (*ibid.*). These fateful cir-

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may have been reconstituted with a new James. But it must be admitted that all this is merely conjectural.

<sup>3</sup> The Judeo-Christians, anxious to magnify the office of James, attributed to Jesus Himself his designation as Bishop of Jerusalem: *Recognitiones*, I, 43 (Migne, P.G., I, 1232). Cf. Chaîne, *op. cit.*, pp. xxxiii-xxxiv.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 294.

cumstances and the Apostolic ardour which they inspired explain the attitude of St. James during these twenty years. Some have pictured him as an obstinate Jew, "who had understood nothing of the profound thought of Jesus";<sup>5</sup> such a view is unjust, and misrepresents the Christian character of the martyr-bishop; if we study more closely the position he took in the two decisive events in the Council of Jerusalem and the visit of Paul to the holy city, we see that in both instances he was influenced by concern for charity rather than for a doctrinal scruple; if he formulated the restrictions in the decree of Jerusalem, this was to enable the disciples of Moses to live without scandal with the pagan converts (*Acts* xv, 21); if he asked St. Paul to give a proof of his respect for the Law, this was because of the multitude of converts faithful to the Law, whom one should not offend (*xxi*, 20). And it was because the request was made for this reason that Paul agreed to it: what James was advocating was not a theology of law and grace, but respect for the conscience of converted Jews; he could make his own the words of Paul to the Corinthians (*I Cor.* viii, 11); "Through thy knowledge, shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ hath died?"

These two incidents fall naturally into their place in the religious life of James and of his church as we know it: he and his church aimed at giving to the Jews amongst whom they lived the picture of an exemplary fidelity to the Law. Paul, writing to the Corinthians, spoke thus of his opponents: "They are Hebrews? So am I. They are Israelites? So am I. They are the seed of Abraham? So am I" (*II Cor.* xi, 22). The Christians of Jerusalem had the same pride of race, but Judaism was not for them merely a privilege of birth but also a rule of life, and they desired to follow this rule in all strictness. They hoped to gain thereby the esteem, and, with God's help, the conversion if not of all their compatriots at Jerusalem, at least of the most fervent of them; and once the élite were won, would not the whole populace follow them? In the first days of the Church, the first believers, thanks to the wonderful vigour of their religious life, were regarded with favour by all the people (*Acts* ii, 47). That is what James and his followers had in view, and was this not applying to the Jews of Jerusalem Paul's principle of becoming all things to all men, in order to gain all to Jesus Christ?

<sup>5</sup> Meyer, *Ursprung*, Vol. III, p. 227.

*St. James and the Judaisers*

This attitude was quite legitimate, and it was doubtless the most suitable for Jerusalem;<sup>6</sup> but it was not without danger: did not this scrupulous fidelity to the Law practised by Christians born in Judaism run the risk of being regarded not as counselled by charity and prudence, but as required by religion itself? And was not the liberty of other Christians, and particularly those who came from the Gentiles, calculated to disturb them? Amongst the followers of James several succumbed to this temptation (*Acts* xv, 5, 24; *Gal.* ii, 12). James himself disavowed them (xv, 24) and recognised the liberty of the Gentiles (*Gal.* ii, 9; *Acts* xv, 13 *et seq.*, xxi, 25). As regards Christians coming from Judaism, James could scarcely imagine any possible conduct differing from that which he and his followed at Jerusalem (xxi, 21). He does not seem to have thought it possible for others to refuse to the Law the docile veneration with which he himself regarded it. Does that mean that he regarded this practice of the Law as the source of salvation? Certainly not.<sup>7</sup> Did he at any rate regard it as a condition for salvation or perfection? Good judges have thought so;<sup>8</sup> but it seems to us difficult

<sup>6</sup> Paul himself adopted it, not only in the practice of the Nazarite vow—that might be regarded merely as a concession to the wish of James—but in his defence before the Sanhedrin, in which he describes himself as a Pharisee, and the son of Pharisees (xxiii, 6).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Lagrange, *Galates*, pp. liv *et seq.*: "The group of James, with James at its head, recognised once for all that the Gentiles can be saved without the observance of the Law of Moses. They must, therefore, in accordance with the most elementary logic, have believed that salvation, even for the Jews, did not depend on the Law as a principle. Peter said so very explicitly; James, if he was consistent, must have thought so, and if he had not thought so, Paul would not have kept relations of ecclesiastical communion with him. . . . Did James regard the Law as obligatory for the Jews, not as a principle but as an essential condition of salvation? We are less in a position to answer in the affirmative here. This was evidently the opinion of a very great number of converted Jews. James and his presbyters did not controvert this opinion. Perhaps they respected it without sharing it. However, without making a categorical statement, in the absence of decisive proofs, it certainly seems that James regarded the Law as salutary, since he practised it so faithfully, and did not allow Paul to be reproached with declaring it to be abrogated for the Jews."

<sup>8</sup> Chaine, *Saint Jacques*, pp. xxxiv *et seq.*: "Did he regard legal works as necessary for the Jews as a condition of salvation or of perfection? The narrative of the Acts concerning the last visit of Paul to Jerusalem would lead us to think so. . . . If in these circumstances the discourse (xxi, 20-5) was made by James or approved by him, as we may well think, we are led to conclude that the latter really regarded the Law as obligatory for the Jews from the standpoint of perfection or as a condition of salvation." Cf. Lagrange, passage quoted above, n. 7.

to seek in our documents so precise a theological answer; as to the conduct which one should adopt, James's preferences are easy to perceive; but everything suggested such conduct to him, not only his Jewish surroundings which he wanted to win for Christ, but equally the assiduous and fervent practice of these rites which had left its imprint on his soul. Peter, whom God destined to a wider apostolate, felt that Judaism was an intolerable burden (xv, 10); James, whom God reserved exclusively for the apostolate in Jerusalem, does not seem to have felt its weight. That a converted Jew, and especially an Apostle, should carry this yoke until his death, and should exhort his brethren born in Judaism to the same fidelity, was quite a natural attitude for James to take, and does not call for discussion.

### *The Epistle of St. James*

The Epistle of St. James does not deal with the question of legal observances; this silence is all the more noteworthy because, in all probability, the Epistle belongs to the last years of the Apostle's life.<sup>9</sup> If, after the Council of Jerusalem, and so many controversies which had troubled Syria, Galatia and Achaia, the Bishop of Jerusalem put aside a question so keenly discussed, it is because he was not the head of a party, seeking to impose his own view, but an Apostle of Christ anxious to maintain concord everywhere.<sup>10</sup>

He does indeed discuss the question of faith and works (ii, 14-26); but this discussion itself leaves entirely on one side the controversy concerning legal observances; the works of which St. James speaks are not the works of the Law, in which some Judaisers were seeking the source of justification, but the works of religion, and above all works of well-doing arising out of faith, of which they were at once the sign and the fruits.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> It seems certainly later than the Epistle to the Romans, and must therefore be dated in the years 57-62.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Chaîne, *op. cit.*, p. lxxxviii: "It is better to explain the silence of James by a reason other than the date. Prudence . . . explains it well. Since the Jews could be sanctified in Christ without being obliged to renounce the Law, James thought it superfluous to consider the difficulties of those who thought themselves dispensed from it. He desired peace, and deliberately avoided all thorny questions."

<sup>11</sup> Hence there is no difference here between St. James and St. Paul. St. Augustine remarks: "Paul speaks of the words which precede faith; James, of works which follow faith" (*De diversis quaestionibus*, q. 76; Migne, *P.L.*, XL, 89).

"What shall it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, but hath not works? Shall faith be able to save him? And if a brother or sister be naked, and want daily food, and one of you say to them: Go in peace, be ye warmed and filled; yet give them not those things that are necessary for the body, what shall it profit? So faith also, if it have not works, is dead in itself" (ii, 14-17).

St. James here merely repeats what he has taught earlier in the same Epistle: "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if a man be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he shall be compared to a man beholding his own countenance in a glass; for he beheld himself, and went his way, and presently forgot what manner of man he was . . ." (i, 22-24, cf. iv, 17). And all this brings us back to the conclusion of the sermon of Jesus on the Mount: "Everyone that heareth these My words, and doth them, shall be likened to a wise man that built his house upon a rock . . ." (*Matt.* vii, 24).

For the rest, it is not only by this feature that the Epistle of St. James recalls the Sermon on the Mount; no other writing in the New Testament so faithfully echoes it: in the condemnation of oaths and of vain words,<sup>12</sup> the prohibition of cursing and judging,<sup>13</sup> the example of the prophets,<sup>14</sup> the beatitudes, and particularly the praise of mercy<sup>15</sup> and of poverty. In the Gospel of St. Luke the beatifying of poverty is, by contrast, associated with the malediction of riches (vi, 20-27); so James, after having extolled the privilege of the poor, whom God has chosen as "heirs of the kingdom" (ii, 4), pronounces against the rich anathemas which have the same tones as the maledictions pronounced by the Lord:

"Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl in your miseries which shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered, and the rust of them shall be

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Doubtless it is not by chance that James (ii, 2) takes up also the example of Abraham, in order to draw from it a doctrine which is seemingly opposed to that of Paul (*Rom.* iv, 2). We may reasonably think that James is here correcting the error of some Christians who had wrongly interpreted Paul's thought (cf. Augustine, *ibid.*). In these matters such errors were not rare, and more than one had to be dealt with by St. Paul himself (*Rom.* iii, 8; vi, 1; *I Cor.* v, 10). On this whole question, cf. Chaine, *op. cit.*, pp. lxxix-lxxx.

<sup>12</sup> v, 12; cf. *Matt.* v, 34-7.

<sup>13</sup> iii, 9; cf. *Matt.* v, 44; *Luke* vi, 28; *James* iv, 11; v, 9; cf. *Matt.* vii, 1-2; *Luke* vi, 37.

<sup>14</sup> v, 10; cf. *Matt.* v, 44; *Luke* vi, 23.

<sup>15</sup> ii, 13; cf. *Matt.* v, 7; *Luke* vi, 37. Cf. Chaine, *op. cit.*, pp. lxxvi-lxxvii.

for a testimony against you, and shall eat your flesh like fire. You have stored up to yourselves wrath against the last days. Behold the hire of the labourers, who have reaped down your fields, which by fraud has been kept back by you, crieth, and the cry of them hath entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. You have feasted upon earth, and in riotousness you have nourished your hearts in the day of slaughter. You have condemned and put to death the Just One, and he resisted you not. Be patient, therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord.”<sup>16</sup>

### *The Martyrdom of St. James*

“You have condemned and put to death the Just One, and he resisted you not.” The martyrdom of St. James, which followed so soon after his Epistle, gave to these words a tragic grandeur. The Church of Jerusalem was truly a “little flock” of poor, whom the Christians of the whole world had to help; numerous, fervent, punctual in the observance of the Law, it compelled the veneration of the best amongst the Jews. But the rich, the Sadducean chief priests and their party opposed it as at the beginning with all the violence of their jealousy and their bitterness. As they had killed Jesus and slain Stephen and James the son of Zebedee, as they had tried to kill Paul, so also they now set upon James the Lord’s brother.

In 61 or 62, the high priest Hanan the Young, “profiting by the fact that Festus was dead and Albinus his successor had not yet arrived, summoned the Sanhedrin, and caused to be brought before it the brother of the Lord called James, and some others, as guilty of having violated the Law; he had them stoned.”<sup>17</sup>

This execution, adds Josephus, angered the moderate men, who denounced it to Albinus; Hanan was deposed from his position,

<sup>16</sup> v, 1-7; cf. *Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ*, Vol. I, p. 137.

<sup>17</sup> *Antiquities of the Jews*, XX, 9, 1, 199; *Ecclesiastical History*, II, 23, 21. This text of Josephus, who was in Jerusalem that year, is that of an eye-witness. (Cf. Meyer, *Ursprung*, Vol. III, p. 74.) This martyrdom is narrated in quite a different way by Hegesippus, quoted by Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, II, 23, 4-18; this very detailed passage has long been regarded by historians with mistrust (Tillemont’s *Mémoires* contain in an appendix a long dissertation by Arnaud, *Difficultés sur ce que conte Hégésippe de saint Jacques évêque de Jérusalem*); the life of James, like his death, is there transformed by Ebionite legends; this passage tells us nothing about the historic personality of James; but it shows us how his memory was venerated, and exploited, by the Judeo-Christians. The Clementine apocrypha manifest the same tendentious transformation. Cf. Chaine, *op. cit.*, pp. xxxvii-xl.



and replaced by Jesus, son of Damoeas. Very soon a more terrible chastisement was to fall on "the city which killed the prophets."

### *The Fall of Jerusalem*

In 64, Gessius Florus became Procurator of Judea; in 66 his tyrannical administration brought to a head the rebellion which had long been contemplated. After terrible civil dissensions which increased still more the calamities of the Roman invasion, the city of Jerusalem was invested in the spring of 70; it was taken and destroyed in September.<sup>18</sup> Josephus narrates that, when Titus entered into the city, he cried out: "God has indeed fought with us; it is God who has expelled the Jews from these fortresses, for what could human hands or machines do against these towers?" (*Wars of the Jews*, VI, 9, 1, 411). Every Christian will feel the force of this statement still more when, after reading in Josephus the details of this appalling catastrophe, he remembers the death of Jesus and his prophecies.

Before the siege, the Christians left the city: "By a prophecy which had been revealed to the leaders of the Church of Jerusalem, the faithful were admonished to leave the city before the war, and to go and live in a town in Perea named Pella; they accordingly withdrew there, and thus the metropolis of the Jews and all the land of Judea was completely abandoned by the saints."<sup>19</sup>

This exodus had decisive consequences for the Church of Jerusalem: the last link was broken which bound the faithful to Judaism and to the Temple; down to the end they had loved its magnificent construction, its ceremonies, and its memories; now there remained of it not a stone upon a stone; God had weaned them from it. And this exodus finally alienated Jewish opinion from them; they had abandoned Jerusalem at the hour of its great tribulation; their faith was, then, not that of their nation, and they were seeking their salvation elsewhere. From the year 70, the rabbinical literature becomes more violently hostile to Christianity;<sup>20</sup> later on, when the revolt of Bar-Kokhba broke out, and the Jews were, for

<sup>18</sup> The upper city, the last refuge of the besieged, was taken by assault "the eighth day of the month of Gorpiesus" (September 26th, 70), (*Wars of the Jews*, VI, 8, 5, 407).

<sup>19</sup> *Ecclesiastical History*, III, 5, 3. Harnack, *Texte und Untersuchungen*, Vol. I, p. 124, conjectures that this narrative of Eusebius depends on Ariston of Pella.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Klausner, *Jésus de Nazareth*, pp. 54 et seq.

two or three years (133-135) the masters of Judea, the Christians were tortured by the adherents of the false Messias;<sup>21</sup> and in the whole Empire the synagogues became the centres of persecution.

### *St. Simeon and the Church of Jerusalem*

Nevertheless, the Church of Jerusalem, exiled at Pella, organised itself: Simeon, son of Clopas, uncle of Christ, was chosen to succeed St. James. "All preferred him because he was a cousin of the Lord's."<sup>22</sup> This new election emphasised what is already evident from the choice of the first bishop of Jerusalem, who was the Lord's brother: in this church, great importance was attached to blood relationship; the relatives of Christ held a position there which they did not hold elsewhere.<sup>23</sup>

St. Simeon was a worthy successor of St. James, and died a martyr about the year 107. Of his long episcopate we know very little; we learn, however, that the church returned from Pella into Judea; the city of Jerusalem was then scarcely more than a Roman garrison, and the great rebellion which was to break out in 130 would lead to a destruction still more complete than that of 70.

What Eusebius, guided by Hegesippus, narrates concerning these obscure years, affects above all the history of the Lord's relatives: Vespasian had a search made for all the descendants of David, which gave rise to a great persecution (III, 12); Domitian adopted the same measures; the grandsons of Jude, the Lord's brother, were denounced and taken before the emperor; they were modest agriculturalists, and showed their horny hands; Domitian questioned them on the reign of Christ and His coming; then he sent them away with disdain; "when they were set free, they governed the churches, both as martyrs and as relatives of the Lord, and, peace being restored to the church, they lived until the time of Trajan."<sup>24</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Justin, *Apology*, I, 31.

<sup>22</sup> Hegesippus, quoted by Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, IV, 22, 4. Eusebius mentions again this election (*Ecclesiastical History*, III, 11), dating it "after the martyrdom of James and the destruction of Jerusalem"; he adds: "it is said that those of the Apostles and disciples of the Lord who were still in this world came together from everywhere and gathered in the same place with the relatives of the Lord according to the flesh."

<sup>23</sup> In the text quoted above (*Ecclesiastical History*, III, 11), we notice the part played in the election by the relatives of the Lord, with the Apostles and the disciples; doubtless this account is legendary; but this legend arose in the Church of Jerusalem, and reveals its preferences.

<sup>24</sup> *Ecclesiastical History*, III, 20, 1-6. Cf. III, 32, 6.

Hegesippus also narrates that, in the reign of Trajan and the government of consul Atticus, Simeon, when a hundred and twenty years old, was denounced by heretics, and after long days of torments died on a cross; the constancy of this old man in undergoing such tortures aroused great wonder in the assistants and the consul himself.<sup>25</sup>

After the two long episcopates of James and Simeon, the bishops of Jerusalem succeeded one another very rapidly: from the death of Simeon (A.D. 107) to the rebellion which broke out in the twelfth year of Hadrian (A.D. 128-129), there were thirteen bishops. Eusebius knows practically nothing of them except their names; all that he can add—but this information is interesting—is that “they all belonged to the circumcision;”<sup>26</sup> and he gives this explanation: “The church of Jerusalem was at that time composed solely of Hebrew believers; it was so from the time of the apostles until the siege undergone by the Jews who had once more rebelled against Rome, in which they were destroyed in terrible battles.”<sup>27</sup>

After this supreme catastrophe, the old Jerusalem disappeared; the new city which gradually and slowly arose on its ruins was a Hellenic city; its bishops were to play a prominent part in the history of the Church already in the time of Clement and Origen, and still more in the struggle against Arianism, but they were all Greeks, far removed from the Judaism of the bishops of the days before Hadrian.

Thus about 130 there disappeared the only church that we know of composed entirely of Jews who were faithful to the Law. Some thirty years later, St. Justin<sup>28</sup> distinguishes between two groups of Jewish Christians: some observe the Law but do not try to impose it on others; he does not refuse to communicate with these, although some Christians are more severe in their regard; other Jews, on the contrary, who are repelled by all, want to compel the Gentiles to observe the Law. This indulgence on the part of Justin towards the tolerant Jewish Christians is the last vestige of a state of mind which is disappearing; the Christians remain respectful towards the Law, but unanimously regard it as an institution of the past.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 32, 3 and 6.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, IV, 5, 4; cf. *ibid.*, 2.

<sup>27</sup> *Ecclesiastical History*, IV, 5, 2.

<sup>28</sup> Justin Martyr, *Dialogue*, xlvii.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. above, p. 174.

## § 2. ST. JOHN AND THE CHURCHES OF ASIA

*St. John in Jerusalem*

The life of the Apostle St. John after the Ascension and Pentecost appears at first in full light in the early history of the Church of Jerusalem. The son of Zebedee had, before his call by Jesus, been a fellow fisherman with Peter at Bethsaida (*Luke* v, 10). These links had not been broken, but confirmed by the Master,<sup>1</sup> and we find John closely associated with Peter in the first evangelisation of Jerusalem (*Acts* iii, 1 *et seq.*), and of Samaria (viii, 14 *et seq.*). On the occasion of the Council of Jerusalem, John is named by St. Paul with Peter and James as one of the "pillars" of the Church (*Gal.* ii, 9). But that is the last time we find him at Jerusalem: when Paul returned there in 57, he found there James and the elders, but neither Peter nor John, nor any other Apostle, was there at that time. From that moment John carried on his apostolic mission outside Jerusalem; the details of this mission are unknown to us, as are those of the other Apostles, but St. Paul mentions their existence (*I Cor.* ix, 5).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> We find the two Apostles thus associated already in the Gospels: *Luke* xxii, 8; *John* xviii, 15; xx, 3; xxi, 20.

<sup>2</sup> Some historians have thought that St. John died a martyr. They base themselves above all on the reply of Jesus to the sons of Zebedee: "You shall indeed drink of the chalice that I drink of" (*Mark* x, 39); they infer from this that the two brothers were martyred together: thus E. Schwartz, *Ueber den Tod der Söhne Zebedaei*, Göttingen, 1904, and several articles in the *Zeitschrift für N.T. Wissenschaft*, Vol. XI, 1, 10, pp. 89-102; Vol. XV, 1914, pp. 210-21; W. Heitmüller, *ibid.*, Vol. XV, pp. 189-90. This hypothesis cannot be maintained: James the Great died in 42, or at the latest in 44, martyred by Herod Agrippa (*Acts* xii, 2), but many years later John took part in the Council of Jerusalem (*Gal.* ii, 9). Other historians separate the two martyrdoms, but hold that John was killed by the Jews at some date unknown. Thus Lietzmann, *Geschichte*, Vol. I, p. 247. This hypothesis respects the testimony of St. Paul, but takes away from Schwartz's argument its main force: if we separate the end of the two sons of Zebedee there is no more reason for saying that in both cases the "chalice" necessarily signifies a violent death. We must also remember the words of Jesus to Peter in the last chapter of the fourth Gospel, and the commentary which they called forth (*John* xxi, 21-3): the obvious sense of the text is that the "disciple whom Jesus loved" survived Peter for a long time, and that this prolonged survival which astonished Christians is explained by a special will of the Lord. On all this question, see L. de Grandmaison, *Jesus Christ*, Vol. I, pp. 147-55. Here will also be found a refutation of the very flimsy arguments based on a text in Papias, and the statements of a few early martyrologies.

### *St. John in Asia*

After long years of obscurity, John appears once more, not at Jerusalem but in Asia. When did he go there? That is impossible to determine. The latest references to Ephesus and Asia which we can find in St. Paul, in the two letters to Timothy, give no indication of the presence at or even of the visits to these churches by St. John; there is the same silence in the first letter of St. Peter, addressed about this time "to the strangers dispersed through Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia." On the other hand, the Apocalypse, the Gospel, and the Johannine Epistles show that the writer of these was in Asia and enjoyed great authority there. In this prophet and this evangelist we recognise the Apostle John, and the testimony of the books themselves is clarified and upheld by a very early and well-founded tradition.<sup>3</sup>

### *The Church and the Empire*

From this Johannine literature we have to cull here only that which gives us information concerning the history of the Church, and in particular of the churches of Asia towards the end of the first century. What we note to begin with is the war waged against the Church by the powers of this world, and in particular by the Roman Empire. This feature did not appear in the Pauline literature; on the other hand, it shows itself already in the first letter of St. Peter: the pagans adopt an attitude of distrust and even of hostility towards the Christians, who are calumniated (ii, 12), persecuted (iii, 13), and reproached for the name of Christ (iv, 14). Christians must be prepared for everything, and endure all things, as Christ suffered (iii, 18 *et seq.*); they must be ready to give a reason for their hope (iii, 16). In all this we see the hostile treatment of individuals rather than an administrative persecution. Even so, Christians are henceforth liable to suffer for the name of Christ (iv, 16), and in the midst of all these dangers, in face of a hostile power, Peter advises them to submit to all legitimate authority, including that of the king (ii, 13 *et seq.*), who at that time was Nero.

<sup>3</sup> We cannot repeat here a demonstration which has often been given: For the Apocalypse, see P. Allo, *Apocalypse*, ch. 13 of the Introduction, pp. clxxxviii-ccxxxii; for the Gospel, see P. Lagrange, *Saint Jean*, ch. i, pp. xii-lxvi, and on the whole question, L. de Grandmaison, *Jesus Christ*, Vol. I, pp. 125-90.

The Apocalypse reveals a still graver situation: the Church has to meet not only the hostility of the pagan world, but also a bloody persecution: it is a fight between Christ and Antichrist, the saints and the beast.<sup>4</sup>

John himself shared in these tribulations: he was exiled to Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus (i, 9). Antipas at Pergamus had been slain for the faith (ii, 13); others had suffered the same penalty, and the prophet beheld them impatient for the triumph of God:

"I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice saying: How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and revenge our blood . . . ? (vi, 9-10).

In another vision he saw the great multitude of the elect; amongst them he noticed some who were clothed in white robes. Who were they?

"These are they who are come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore they are before the throne of God, and they serve him day and night in his temple, and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell over them. . . . God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (vii, 14-17; cf. xii, 11; xx, 4).

This "great tribulation" was the persecution begun by Nero with a barbarous ferocity, and continued by Domitian with a tenacious hatred.<sup>5</sup> Rome is the Beast which has on its forehead: "Babylon the Great, the mother of the fornications and the abominations of the earth"; it is the "woman drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus" (xvii, 5-7). These maledictions are easy to understand if we remember that Rome at that time was set forth as an object of worship for all the subjects of the Empire. Above all from the time of Domitian,

<sup>4</sup> We cannot go into details here concerning the interpretation of the Apocalypse (cf. Allo, especially pp. 200-10; Charles, especially pp. xciii-cxvii); we are only concerned with what the book tells us about Christianity in Asia.

<sup>5</sup> The Apocalypse was very probably written towards the end of the reign of Domitian; cf. Allo, *op cit.*, pp. cciii-ccx; Charles, *op. cit.*, pp. xvi-xcvii. At the same time it makes known to us the situation of the Church under Domitian, and the still bleeding wounds of the Neronian persecution.

and especially in the province of Asia,<sup>6</sup> the imperial worship of Rome and of Augustus was accepted with enthusiasm by the whole pagan population of the Empire; it was at once a religious worship, and a sign of loyalty, and anyone who refused it was suspect; "no man might buy or sell but he that hath the character, or the name of the beast" (xiii, 17). This suspicion was especially dangerous under Domitian, who was so jealous of divine honours.<sup>7</sup> To this day, when we visit the ruins of Pergamus, and contemplate on the top of the great Acropolis the remains of the altar of Rome and Augustus, we have a lively impression of the "throne of Satan" which dominated Asia and the world.

Thus broke out the antagonism between the two Empires which were to dispute the ownership of the world,<sup>8</sup> and the leaders of the two camps: on the one hand the Lamb, and on the other the Beast. Already the prophet could hear the heavenly canticles which celebrated the triumph of the Lamb<sup>9</sup> and the death of the Beast.<sup>10</sup>

### *The Letters to the Seven Churches*

This struggle of the Church against the Empire shows its attachment to its Master, the firmness of its hope, and also its impatience; but the Johannine writings, and in particular the Apocalypse, enable us to penetrate into its inmost life, and to attain to the centre of faith and life from which sprang the strength of the martyrs. The

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Chapot, *La province romaine proconsulaire d'Asie*, Paris, 1904, pp. 419-53. From 725-9, Pergamus had obtained permission to erect a temple to Rome and Augustus. Tacitus (*Annales*, IV, 55-6) relates at length the sending of embassies to Tiberius in 780/26 by the cities of Asia who were quarrelling about the honour of erecting a temple to Tiberius: these were Tralles, Hypaepa, Laodicea, Magnesia, Ilium, Halicarnasse, Pergamus, Ephesus, Miletus, Sardis, Smyrna; the last-mentioned city was chosen (p. 440).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Gsell, *Essai sur le règne de l'empereur Domitien*, Paris, 1893, p. 312: "Outside Rome there was one god who was adored everywhere, the reigning Emperor. He had to be worshipped, above all under Domitian, who required belief in his divinity even in Rome itself. But those who were converted to Judaism or to Christianity did not recognise this deity any more than the others. And this was, in the eyes of Domitian, the greatest possible crime."

<sup>8</sup> On the struggle, cf. Allo, *op. cit.*, pp. 200-10; Westcott, *The Two Empires*, in his edition of the Johannine epistles, pp. 250-82.

<sup>9</sup> v, 9-13. We may see in these canticles some echoes of the liturgical hymns of the Church. Cf. *History of the Doctrine of the Trinity*, Vol. I, p. 264.

<sup>10</sup> xiv, 8; cf. xvii, 8.

letters to the seven churches are, from this point of view, a very valuable document.<sup>11</sup>

Viewing them as a whole, we note in the first place that nothing in them directly recalls the memory of St. Paul; ten or fifteen years afterwards, St. Ignatius, writing to the Ephesians, will remind them that they were formed in the Christian life by St. Paul; St. John, however, does not mention it. There is nothing strange about that: he was a prophet, and an Apostle; he spoke in his own name, in the fulness of his own authority, without mentioning anyone, except the Lord Jesus and the Spirit.<sup>12</sup>

The seven letters make known to us communities which are numerous and full of life, but are being attacked. Some of them have fallen off from their first fervour. At Ephesus there is watchfulness and perseverance, but no longer as in the beginning (ii, 2 *et seq.*). Smyrna, with Philadelphia, is the only one which is not reproached; but it is poor and persecuted. Pergamus resists Satan valiantly, though he has his throne there; Antipas was a faithful witness, and suffered death; but there are some Nicolaites there, and they are tolerated. Thyatira is faithful and growing, but it also tolerates the Nicolaites and their prophetess Jezabel. Sardis is enfeebled and dying, although it seems to be alive. Philadelphia is also weak, but faithful; it seems to be destined to develop: the door is open, and God will give it some of those who are of the synagogue of Satan, those who say they are Jews and are not. Laodicea is rich, but lukewarm.

These brief descriptions bring home to us the dangers which threatened these Asiatic churches: they were being ravaged not so much by a persecuting paganism as by an undermining paganism, the moral corruption and perverse gnosis of which were penetrating everywhere. The danger for these churches was the doctrine of

<sup>11</sup> The churches to which these letters were addressed were not the only ones then existing in Asia, and not the only ones with which St. John was concerned; their number was chosen because of its symbolical value, and the choice of the particular seven seems to have been determined, at least in part, by geographical considerations: these churches were seven centers whence the message would spread to the surrounding Christian communities. Cf. W. R. Ramsay, *Letters to the Seven Churches* (London, 1904); Swete, *Apocalypse*, p. lxxii; Allo, *op cit.*, p. xvi.

<sup>12</sup> Renan (*Saint Paul*, pp. 303 *et seq.*, 367 *et seq.*; *L'Antichrist*, pp. 363 *et seq.*) tries to find in these letters "a cry of hatred against Paul and his friends," who are the Nicolaites, and the synagogue of Satan. Jezabel is the "symbolical designation of Paul." This exegesis is absurd, and it is now universally abandoned. Cf. Swete, *op. cit.*, p. lxii.



Balaam, "who taught the children of Israel to eat and to commit fornication"; this was the "doctrine of the Nicolaites."<sup>13</sup>

### *The Christian Church*

The Christian church which the Apostle was addressing had to keep itself from contamination by these sects. But she herself was in no way a sect: she comprised amongst her elect some from all the twelve tribes of Israel, but these Jews were not alone: they formed part of an immense multitude that no man could number, of every nation, tribe, people and tongue (vii, 4-9). The worship which they gave to God was truly that which God desired. It was not at all confined to Jerusalem or Mount Garizim, but it was worship in spirit and in truth (*John* iv, 21-23). This worship was addressed to God and the Lamb (v, 8; 12-14), and to these was offered one and the same adoration in one religious act. Here below the saints are the "servants of Jesus" (i, 1; ii, 20, etc.), as well as the servants of God (vii, 3; x, 7, etc.); those who will have "part in the first resurrection"<sup>14</sup> will be "priests of God and of Christ" (xx, 6). This divine worship given to Christ is based on belief in His divinity: He is the "beginning of the creation of God";<sup>15</sup> He is, like God, the beginning and the end, the first and the last, the alpha and omega;<sup>16</sup> like God, He is "alive";<sup>17</sup> like God, He is

<sup>13</sup> ii, 14-15. These "Nicolaites" mentioned in the letter to Pergamus and in that to Thyatira are not otherwise known to us. It is difficult to gather from these two brief references any precise knowledge concerning this sect. Allo devotes an excursus to them (*op. cit.*, pp. 46-8); he sees in them disciples of a "syncretistic mysticism," who considered themselves at liberty to fornicate, to eat idol offerings in pagan temples, and who indulged in speculations which John calls "the depths of Satan."

<sup>14</sup> What is said here of the "first resurrection" and of the thousand years which follow it, has led within the Christian Church to very different interpretations. We shall mention these later on when we give the history of Millenarianism. As to the mind of St. John himself, we must recognise that the Second Coming of the Lord is not prior but posterior to the Millennium, that this reign of a thousand years does not apply to the whole of humanity, and that it coexists with the empire of Antichrist. From all this we infer with Allo: "The prophecy of the Millennium, which perfectly coheres with the other prophecies in the book, is simply a figure of the spiritual domination of the Church Militant, united to the Church Triumphant, from the glorification of Jesus down to the end of the world." Cf. Allo, *op. cit.*, excursus 37 (pp. 317-29); Swete, *op. cit.*, pp. 264-6.

<sup>15</sup> iii, 14; cf. *Col.* i, 15-18.

<sup>16</sup> i, 17; ii, 8; xxii, 13. Cf., referring to God, i, 8; xxi, 6.

<sup>17</sup> i, 18. Cf. iv, 9-10; x, 6.

holy and true;<sup>18</sup> like God, He searches the reins and the hearts, He has the keys of death and of hell.<sup>19</sup>

What brings out best the significance of this belief and this worship is its intransigence: on two occasions (xix, 10; xxii, 9) John tries to prostrate himself at the feet of the revealing angel, but he was at once prevented; "See thou do it not; I am thy fellow servant and of thy brethren the prophets. Adore God." In the Epistle to the Colossians and that to the Hebrews we find a condemnation of the divine worship which certain Gnostics, under colour of humility, rendered to the angels, compromising the transcendence of the Son of God and the jealous worship which they owed to Him. Here we find the same intransigence of the Christian belief: "We have but one God and one Lord."

### *The Gospel of St. John*

This faith in the Son of God which we find in the Apocalypse already prepares us for the fourth Gospel. At the end of the latter book John will write: "these miracles have been related that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, you may have life in his name" (xx, 31). When John was at Patmos seeing the visions which he communicated to the churches in the Apocalypse, he had not yet written his gospel; but for many years he had already been preaching it;<sup>20</sup> and already the whole of Asia was penetrated with the reflection of this teaching which was so soon to become a book; is it not this reflection which we already perceive in the eucharistic prayers of the *Didache*?<sup>21</sup>

When studying the life of the infant church at Jerusalem, we endeavoured to recognise there the echo of these daily repeated Gospel texts: the beatitudes, the blessedness of the "little flock," and the trust which it ought to have in the Heavenly Father. Similarly, we shall best understand the Christian life at Ephesus and the churches under the influence of St. John if we re-read his Gospel, the discourse on the bread of life, the Good Shepherd, and the discourse after the Last Supper.

<sup>18</sup> iii, 7. Cf. vi, 10.

<sup>19</sup> i, 18; ii, 23. On all this, see *History of the Doctrine of the Trinity*, Vol. I, pp. 349-52.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Stanton, *The Gospels as Historical Documents*, Vol. III, pp. 50 *et seq.*

<sup>21</sup> *Infra*, Bk. II.

We cannot give here a detailed study of this book;<sup>22</sup> but it is indispensable to point out its distinctive features; these will reveal to us the personality of the Apostle John, and the churches which he penetrated with his spirit.

Clement of Alexandria already at the end of the second century set forth with much force the peculiar character of the Gospel of St. John: it is a "spiritual gospel." After mentioning the origin of the three synoptics, he goes on: "John then, the last, seeing that the external features (of the life of Christ) had been set forth in the gospels, being pressed by the disciples, and divinely moved by the Spirit, composed a spiritual gospel."<sup>23</sup> And Origen, at the beginning of his commentary, writes: "I think that, as the four gospels are the foundations of the faith of the Church"<sup>24</sup>—and on these foundations rests the whole world reconciled to God in Christ—the first fruits of the gospels are to be found in that which you have asked us to interpret according to our power, the Gospel according to St. John. . . . We will make bold to say that, if the gospels are the first fruits of all the Scriptures, we have in this book the first fruits of the gospels, and no one can grasp its meaning if he has not rested on Jesus' breast and received from Jesus Mary as his own mother also."

These two venerable texts draw our attention to the most salient characteristics of this book. It is a spiritual book, and it owes this excellence to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, but also to the intimacy which united the well-beloved disciple to Jesus and His Mother. Sometimes attempts have been made to find the source of this high theology in the Christian tradition prior to St. John, and in particular in Paulinism,<sup>25</sup> and we must certainly recognise the profound agreement of thought here, but also at the same time the individual characteristics which distinguish them so clearly from one another.<sup>26</sup> Above all, we must abstain from regarding this book, with its deep and living unity, as an artificial synthesis of the evangelical tradition with Pauline theology; John could say

<sup>22</sup> It is unnecessary, as commentaries are plentiful. It will suffice to mention here those of P. Lagrange and of P. Durand. For a theological study, see the chapter in *History of the Doctrine of the Trinity*, Vol. I.

<sup>23</sup> *Hypotyposes*, fragment quoted by Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, VI, 14, 7.

<sup>24</sup> We have here the thought and the very expression of Irenæus, III, 11, 8.

<sup>25</sup> We do not mention Philo: thirty years ago many thought to find in Philo the key to the fourth Gospel; nowadays this illusion deceives far fewer historians. So much the better. Cf. *History of the Doctrine of the Trinity*, Vol. I, pp. 447-50.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. *infra*, p. 320.

with St. Paul: "The gospel which I preach is not according to man, for neither did I receive it of man, nor did I learn it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."

And when we speak here of "the revelation of Jesus Christ," we must think, not exclusively indeed but primarily, of the revelation which the beloved disciple received from his Master when he was living with Him. This revelation was clarified by the Spirit from the first; after the death of Jesus, and after Pentecost, this illumination became more penetrating, more intimate, more complete, bringing out into full consciousness many a point previously seen for a moment and then lost sight of, interpreting many words of the Master hardly heard and scarcely understood. In all this the evangelist recognises the effect of the promise of Jesus: "The Holy Ghost . . . will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you."<sup>27</sup>

It is that that gives to this gospel the character of quiet confidence which distinguishes it from the others. Doubtless the synoptics also put before us the "mystery of the kingdom of God" entrusted only to disciples (*Mark* vi, ii), these words "whispered in the ear" (*Matt.* x, 27). But these words themselves have not the note of discreet, moving and intimate utterance which characterises the discourse after the Last Supper and the great prayer with which it concludes. Neither shall we find in the synoptics these personal recollections so soberly worded but so full of emotion, such as the account of the first meeting with Jesus<sup>28</sup> or the confidential whisper by Christ concerning the treason of Judas;<sup>29</sup> or the last testament of Jesus bequeathing Mary to John: "He saith to His mother: Woman, behold thy Son. . . . And from that hour the disciple took her to his own" (xix, 26-27).

Thence also comes the great place given in this gospel to the private conversations of Jesus with Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman, and the man born blind. The dramatic form of these accounts has rightly been admired, but what gives them their value

<sup>27</sup> xiv, 26; cf. ii, 22; xii, 16; xvi, 4.

<sup>28</sup> i, 38-9: "'Rabbi, where dwellest thou?' He saith to them: 'Come and see.' They came, and saw where he abode, and they stayed with him that day: now it was about the tenth hour."

<sup>29</sup> xiii, 23-6: "There was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, and said to him: Who is it of whom he speaketh? He therefore, leaning on the breast of Jesus, saith to him: Lord, who is it? Jesus answered: He it is to whom I shall reach bread dipped . . ."

most of all is their depth of religious intuition: nowhere else do we find, in face of the revelation by Christ, the hesitation of the master in Israel who is touched by the truth but embarrassed by its knowledge, or the courageous desire of a sinful woman who allows herself to be won by the attraction of the living water and sacrifices all to it, or the quite simple loyalty of the man who is healed, who recognises the work of God and believes in it whatever the risk. And Jesus, who did not trust Himself to man "because he knew what was in man," immediately entrusts Himself to a generous and loyal soul, no matter whose it may be. To the Samaritan woman He says: "I am the Messias, who am speaking with thee" (iv, 26); to the man born blind: "Dost thou believe in the Son of God?"—"Who is he, Lord, that I may believe in him?"—"Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee" (ix, 36-37).

### *The Son of God*

In addition to these individual conversations, there are also in this gospel some great theological discourses, and these in turn are no less characteristic. We recognise in them the aim of the evangelist to which the whole work converges: it is to lead Christians to faith in the Son of God. Such is the discourse on the bread of life; such above all are the discourses pronounced by Jesus at Jerusalem on the Feast of Tabernacles, or again at the Feast of the Dedication.<sup>30</sup> The insistence of the evangelist on these discourses omitted by the synoptics has been noticed by all exegetes; to explain it, some have tried to see in the author of the fourth gospel an inhabitant of Jerusalem who knew Jesus only in that city on the occasions of the feasts<sup>31</sup>—an hypothesis which nothing suggests and nothing requires. Instead of attributing to an unknown disciple, or to St. Mark, this glorious heritage, it is infinitely wiser to leave it to St. John the beloved disciple, whom the Gospel itself sufficiently makes known and whom tradition explicitly identifies. It is not difficult to understand why, in his plan of bringing out into full light the Son of God, John gives so great a place to this preach-

<sup>30</sup> Cf. above, p. 135.

<sup>31</sup> This hypothesis is developed, for instance, in the book of J. Weiss on *Christian Origins*, p. 612. The author even adds: "It is possible that this author is John Mark, the one who is commonly regarded as the author of the second gospel." This chapter was composed after the death of Weiss by R. Knopf, but from notes and other works by Weiss.

ing at Jerusalem: to the Galilean crowds, timid, wavering, but well disposed, Jesus manifested Himself only with a prudent reserve, and first of all it was His Heavenly Father whom He made known and His kingdom, then, little by little, the Messianic King. In the case of the Jews of Jerusalem Jesus did not have to take the same steps, and even could not do so. After two years of public ministry, in presence of opponents or disciples accustomed to theological discussions, and who went straight to the divine mystery which they suspected or feared, Jesus could not stop half way, and did not attempt to do so. And then, if Christ felt that the opposition against Him was becoming exasperated, and saw the Cross appearing at the end of this last stage, He determined to choose Himself the ground of the combat, and to be condemned, not for sedition, but as the Son of God. Accordingly, He set aside all the captious questions concerning the Messias, the Son of David, and the tribute due to Cæsar, and brought back the discussion to His great religious affirmation, to His divine filiation. This it is that, in the synoptic gospels, dominates all the controversies of the last week, the only time which in their accounts was spent in Jerusalem and the Temple. It is this also that appears in the preaching on the great feasts of the autumn and winter which St. John has transmitted to us.

Now, are not these dispositions of the crowds at Jerusalem at the end of the ministry of Jesus somewhat similar to the dispositions of the crowds in Asia at the end of the apostolic age? The hearers, docile or mistrustful, whom John wants to reach, are indeed no longer those he had known at Jerusalem when Peter began his preaching: only a few weeks had elapsed since the death of Jesus, and they were still moved by His preaching and His miracles, and cast down by the terrible crisis of the Passion: for these, what was required was to recall the immediate past, so many touching and revealing words, so many good deeds, and then to show that this death had been foretold by the prophets, and that God had permitted it only to glorify Christ by raising Him up. More than sixty years had passed since then; Judea was now only a desert, Jerusalem a heap of ruins. But already the Church had grown, spreading throughout the Roman empire and even beyond its boundaries, and Jesus appears in a majesty truly divine. The death on the Cross is a glorious exaltation: Jesus had foretold it; from this height He draws all to Himself (xii, 32; cf. iii, 14; viii, 28; xii, 27). Those

who were won by Him contemplate not only His passion, but His whole life, in the splendour of this glory: "we saw his glory, the glory as it were of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (i, 14). Hence their preferences, like those of the evangelist, draw them to the theological discourses; they like to hear Him saying again: "Before Abraham was made, I am" (viii, 58); "I and the Father are one" (x, 30); "He that seeth me, seeth the Father also" (xiv, 9); "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world, again I leave the world and I go to the Father" (xvi, 28).

All these texts bring no new revelation, nothing which goes beyond the belief of St. Paul or that of the first evangelists and the first Apostles;<sup>32</sup> and yet it is certainly true that this spiritual gospel is distinct from the others: in the synoptics, the divinity of the Son of God underlies all the evangelical message and alone makes it intelligible, but it is only in a few incidents of the life of Jesus or a few of His words that this divinity appears in full light. In St. John it is quite different: the great mystery is already clearly set forth to the reader in the prologue: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God";<sup>33</sup> at the end of the Gospel the cry of St. Thomas constitutes an echo to the prologue: "My Lord and my God!" (xx, 28), and in the whole Gospel the actions and words of Jesus set forth to us the same revelation.

### *The Word Made Flesh*

This spiritual gospel, this revelation of the glory of the only begotten Son, is not an Apocalypse; what John describes to us here are not the visions of Patmos; it is the life of the "Word made flesh," who "dwelt amongst us." "That which was from the beginning," affirms St. John,<sup>34</sup> "which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life . . . we declare unto you." And

<sup>32</sup> See *Origins of the Doctrine of the Trinity: the Son of God in the Synoptic Gospels* Vol. I, pp. 198-251), in the early Church (pp. 259-80), and in St. Paul (pp. 286-314).

<sup>33</sup> On the "Word," cf. *Origins of the Doctrine of the Trinity*, Vol. I, pp. 267-80.

<sup>34</sup> I John i, 1 *et seq.*; The identity of the author of this Epistle and the gospel is manifest, and is generally accepted. Cf. Westcott, *The Epistles of St. John*, London, 1909, pp. xxx and xliii *et seq.*; Stanton, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 83-103.

at the end of the account of the Passion: "One of the soldiers with a spear opened his side, and immediately there came out blood and water. And he that saw it, hath given testimony, and his testimony is true. And he knoweth that he saith true: that you also may believe" (xix, 34-35).

This historic reality of the words and actions of Jesus reported by John is the indispensable foundation of the gospel: it was written "that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name" (xx, 31). If the miracles of Jesus are merely symbols, and his discourses are but the meditations of John himself, the faith of the disciples is vain, and the preaching of the Apostle is but a false witness.<sup>35</sup>

This consideration, already very strong, becomes still more evident and more powerful if we bear in mind the controversies which the author of the fourth gospel has to refute: the most dangerous opponents he denounces are the Docetic Gnostics, who deny the reality of the Incarnation: according to these heretics, Jesus is not the Christ; the Son of God has not come in the flesh. This is to deny the essential doctrine of Christianity: "By this is the spirit of God known. Every spirit which confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God. And every spirit that dissolveth Jesus, is not of God" (*I John* iv, 2-3). To these negations the Apostle replies by a categorical affirmation of the doctrines contested: Jesus is the Messiah; the Son of God has truly become incarnate. This controversy is carried on explicitly in the Epistle; the Gospel, written about the same date, in the same surroundings, by the same Apostle, is inspired by the same preoccupations. Certainly it is not a book of controversy, but it is a testimony and a teaching, and as such, it aims at establishing the faith and clarifying it. That is why, at the very beginning of the book, the reality of the Incarnation is so strongly affirmed: "The Word was made flesh." If in reading this gospel we bear in mind the doctrinal war waged by the Apostle, we shall see in it the solemn affirmation of a witness who maintains, against the heretical denials, the reality of that humanity which he had seen, heard, and touched. But in this case one could not give to this book a symbolical interpretation

<sup>35</sup> This is what St. Paul said to the Corinthians, with an irresistible force: "If Christ be not risen again, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have given testimony against God that he hath raised up Christ whom he hath not raised up" (*I Cor.* xv, 14-15).



without ruining the very faith which it was intended to establish.<sup>36</sup>

This historic reality of the actions and discourses of Jesus as they are reported by St. John is of the greatest importance. If it is not accepted, then we have in this gospel no more than a beautiful theological speculation, or, if one prefers, an exalted mystical contemplation. We might still admire it, and even allow ourselves to be uplifted by it, but it would be St. John who was attracting us, not Jesus. The merit of the gospel is precisely that it presents to the Christian Jesus Himself: in the closing days of this apostolic age wholly illumined by the light of the Incarnate Word, the beloved disciple makes Him known in the reality of His flesh and in the splendour of His glory. It is towards Him that the Epistles of St. Paul were drawing the faithful soul, and never will a Christian weary of reading his moving appeals; but in this gospel it is no longer the Apostle who is heard, but the Master. His voice is not, like that of St. Paul, trembling with emotion, but discreet, profound, recollected; his discourses, especially the most intimate ones, are pronounced in a whisper; their tranquillity is so pronounced that a distracted reader hears them without understanding them, and lets their smooth flow glide over his soul. But those whose hearts God opens listen greedily; these discourses are Spirit and Life.

### *The Influence of St. John*

On the churches of Asia, and on the entire Church, the influence of St. John has been incalculable. In his lifetime he, like St. Paul, met with resistance. His Epistles bear the trace of them: witness the jealous and quarrelsome Diotrophes (*III John* 9). These human imperfections, and the more grave dangers of Gnosticism and Docetism saddened the Apostle; but all that has passed away like clouds which leave no trace, while the teaching of St. John is graven on the hearts of Christians. We recognise its influence in

<sup>36</sup> This controversy carried on by St. John is clarified by a comparison with the letters of St. Ignatius and St. Polycarp, written a dozen years later, and in the same Asiatic circles: "Whosoever does not confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is an antichrist, and whoever does not confess the witness of the cross, is of the devil (Polycarp, *Phil.* vii). "It is in truth that he was born, ate and drank, it is in truth that he was persecuted under Pontius Pilate, it is in truth that he suffered and died . . . and it is in truth that he rose from the dead" (Ignatius, *Trall.*, IX, X; cf. *Smyrn.*, II; *Ephes.*, VII). Cf. *infra*, ch. x, 2 and 3, and *History of the Doctrine of the Trinity*, Vol. I, pp. 361-4.

St. Ignatius, St. Polycarp, and above all in the latter's disciple, St. Irenæus. It was not only the theology of St. John, but also his liturgical tradition, which left its impress on the churches of Asia. In 154, the two great bishops of Rome and Smyrna, Anicetus and Polycarp, will endeavour in vain to unify their paschal customs, and though not succeeding, will at least keep unity of communion; thirty years afterwards, Pope St. Victor will impose uniformity: the resistance of Polycrates of Ephesus will reveal the attachment of the Asiatics to their special tradition, authorised, in their eyes, by the gospel and the memory of "John who rested on the bosom of the Saviour" (*Ecclesiastical History*, V, 24, 3, 6). Another disciple of John, Irenæus, will make the love of peace prevail over this too jealous fidelity.<sup>37</sup>

### *The Dispersion of the Apostles*

In our study of the writings of the apostolic age, we have been able to follow, at least in their main outlines, the apostolic careers of St. Peter, St. Paul, St. John and the two St. James. Of the other Apostles, these documents tell us nothing. Towards the end of the second century and the commencement of the third, the Church will see the appearance of new Acts of Apostles, apocryphal works which are not without interest: they make known to us the legends and romances which could then charm and sometimes deceive the Christian people. The Church was severe in their regard; it is prudent to imitate her reserve, and not to transform into historical documents these works of imagination.<sup>38</sup>

But while we put on one side these legends or these romances, we can retain a few traditional facts. A very early tradition puts the dispersion of the Apostles in the twelfth year after the Resurrection;<sup>39</sup> this date coincides in fact with the persecution by Herod Agrippa I; in the years which follow we never see the Twelve

<sup>37</sup> On this conflict, cf. *infra*. Bk. II.

<sup>38</sup> That these apocryphal Acts are of no historic value is a point on which all their editors agree. Cf. Hennecke, *N.T. Apocryphen*, Tübingen, 1933, p. 169; Amann, art. *Apocryphes du N.T.*, in *Supplément to Dict. de la Bible*, Vol. I, p. 488.

<sup>39</sup> This tradition is found in the *Kerygma Petri*, *apud* Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.*, VI, 5, 43, 3; Apollonius, *apud* Eusebius, *Eccles. Hist.*, V. 18, 14; *Actes de Pierre avec Simon*, 5, Voaux's edn., p. 253; cf. Harnack, *Chronologie*, pp. 243 *et seq.* He regards this tradition as "very ancient and well attested." Duchesne is more reserved (*Histoire ancienne de l'église*, Vol. I, p. 20, n. 1).

gathered together again in Jerusalem. But though we can determine the starting point of the mission of the Apostles, the destination of most of them escapes us. In a chapter of Eusebius's *Ecclesiastical History*,<sup>40</sup> in which he claims to reproduce textually a passage from Origen, we read that "Thomas, according to tradition, was allotted the land of the Parthians; Andrew, Scythia; John, Asia." Then he mentions the apostolate of SS. Peter and Paul. In his translation of this passage, Rufinus adds: "Matthew was given Ethiopia; Bartholomew, Further India."<sup>41</sup> These are only vague indications, but they are not without value; what we know of the primitive evangelisation of the countries thus mentioned gives to these statements a confirmation which is not decisive, but is not to be disregarded.

<sup>40</sup> *Ecclesiastical History*, III, 1.

<sup>41</sup> On this text, cf. Harnack, *Mission und Ausbreitung*, pp. 109 et seq.

## GENERAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

WE HERE indicate a certain number of sources which will be constantly utilised, or collections of ancient texts which should be known. This bibliography holds good also for the next few books.

The first name to be mentioned is that of *Eusebius*, Bishop of Cæsarea in Palestine at the beginning of the fourth century, and author of an *Ecclesiastical History* in ten books, from the beginnings of the Church to 324, and also of a *Chronicle*. St. Jerome translated the second book of the latter work, revised it, and continued it until the year 378. The best edition of the Greek text of the *Ecclesiastical History* is that of E. Schwartz in the Berlin *Corpus: Eusebius Werke*, II, *Kirchengeschichte*, Leipzig, 1903, 1908, 1909, 3 vols.

The *Chronicle* is likewise edited in the Berlin *Corpus*, by R. Helm (*Eusebius Werke*, VII: *Die Chronik des Hieronymus*, Leipzig, 1913, 1926, 2 vols.) and by J. Karst (*Eusebius Werke*, V: *Die Chronik des Eusebius aus dem armenischen übersetzt*, Leipzig, 1911).

The *Ecclesiastical History* was translated into Latin by Rufinus, who added two books to it. (Edited by Schwartz and T. Mommsen, 2 vols., in Berlin *Corpus*, Leipzig, 1909. An English translation by Kirsopp Lake and J. Oulton is included in Loeb's Classical Library.)

A Latin historian, the Gallo-Roman Sulpicius Severus, wrote two books of *Chronicles* embracing universal history as far as he knew it, from the creation to the end of the fourth century (edited by Halm in Vienna (*Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum*, 1866). Another Latin writer, the Spanish priest Paul Orosius, a disciple of St. Augustine, also wrote a universal history which, like that of Sulpicius Severus, was independent of that of Eusebius of Cæsarea: *Adversus paganos historiarum libri VII*. This stopped at the year 416 (edited by Langemeister in Vienna *Corpus*, 1882).

The *Liber Pontificalis* is a chronicle of the Popes begun by an unknown author of the sixth century, and of very unequal value.

The best edition is that of Duchesne, Paris, 1886-1892, 2 vols.

In order not to make this bibliography too long, we confine ourselves here to historians properly so called. A list of other Christian writers in Latin and Greek in the first three centuries, who will be referred to on several occasions in the notes to this work, will be found in O. Bardenhewer's *Patrologie*, 3rd edn., Freiburg in Bresgau, 1910 (English translation by Shahan, Herder, 1908), and *Geschichte der altkirchlichen Literatur*, 5 vols., 2nd edn., Freiburg in Bresgau, 1913-1924, with supplement to vol. III, 1923. Their works will be found in Migne's *Patrologia Græca* and *Patrologia Latina*, and also a great number of them in the two new collections in course of publication, the Berlin *Corpus* for Greek writers (*Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte*) and the Vienna *Corpus* for the Latins (*Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum*).

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The *Acts of the Martyrs* are catalogued in the *Bibliotheca hagiographica orientalis*, edited by the Bollandists, Brussels, 1909, the *Bibliotheca hagiographica græca*, edited by the same, Brussels, 1909, and the *Bibliotheca hagiographica latina*, edited by the same, Brussels, 1898-1911, and utilised, with critique and commentaries, in the *Acta Sanctorum*, published likewise by the Bollandists, Antwerp, 1643-Brussels, 1931 (date of the first volume, the work is still in course of publication). The second volume of the month of

November of the *Acta Sanctorum*, Brussels, 1894, concludes the systematic edition of J. B. de Rossi and L. Duchesne, of the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*, the most important martyrological document of antiquity; critical re-edition by Père H. Delehaye and Dom H. Quentin, under the title *Acta Sanctorum novembris tomi II pars posterior qua continetur H. Delehaye commentarius perpetuus in Martyrologium Hieronymianum ad recensionem H. Quentin*, Brussels, 1931.

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Now we come to a number of general works on the early history of the Church. We must mention in the first place a great monument of erudition, somewhat out of date, especially in the last chapters, but still of the greatest value on the whole because of its fullness, the richness of its documentation, and the soundness of its criticisms: the sixteen volumes of the *Mémoires pour servir à l'his-*

*toire ecclésiastique des six premiers siècles*, by the learned and upright Lenain de Tillemont, Paris, 1693-1712.

We must also mention his *Histoire des Empereurs*, Vol. I, 2nd edn., revised by the author, Paris, 1700, Vol. II, Paris, 1691-1738, which contains some valuable material for the early history of the Church.

Here are other works:

Achelis, H. *Das Christentum in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten*, 2 vols. Leipzig, 1912; 2nd edn. of 1st vol., Leipzig, 1924.

Allard, P. *Histoire des persécutions pendant les deux premiers siècles*, 3rd edn., 2 vols. Paris, 1903, 1905.

— *Les persécutions du IIIe siècle*, 2nd edn., Paris, 1898.

— *La persécution de Dioclétien*, 2nd edn., 2 vols., Paris, 1903.

— *Le christianisme et l'Empire romain*, 6th edn., Paris, 1903.

Aube, B. *Histoire des persécutions de l'Eglise*, 2nd edn., 4 vols. Paris, 1875-1886.

Batiffol, P. *Le catholicisme des origines à saint Léon*, I. *L'église naissante et le catholicisme*, 12th edn. Paris, 1927.

Bihlmeyer, K. *Kirchengeschichte, auf Grund des Lehrbuches von F. X. Funk*, I: *Das christliche Altertum*, 9th edn. Paderborn, 1931. French translation, or rather an adaptation of the 1st edn. of Funk was published by the Abbé H. Hemmer, 2 vols., Paris, 3rd edn., 1891.

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Duchesne, L. *Histoire ancienne de l'Eglise*, 3 vols., Paris, 1906, 1907, 1910, English translation: *Early History of the Christian Church*, 1909—.

— *Les origines du culte chrétien*, 5th edn., Paris, 1920. English translation: *Christian Worship*, 5th edn., 1919.

Dufourcq, A. *Histoire ancienne de l'Eglise*:

I. *Les religions païennes et la religion juive comparée*, 6th edn. Paris, 1924.

II. *La révolution religieuse, Jésus*, 6th edn. Paris, 1927.

III. *Le christianisme primitif. Saint Paul, Saint Jean, Saint Irénée*, 6th edn. Paris, 1929.

IV. *Le christianisme et l'Empire romain*, Paris, 1930.

- Ehrhard, A. *Die Kirche der Märtyrer*, Munich, 1932.
- Gwatkin, H. M. *Early Church History to A.D. 313*, 2 vols., London, 1909.
- Harnack, A. *Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur*:  
 I *Die Ueberlieferung und der Bestand*, Leipzig, 1893.  
 II *Die Chronologie*, Leipzig, 1897-1904, 2 vols.
- *Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums*, 4th edn., Leipzig, 1924, 2 vols. English translation: *Expansion of Christianity in the first three centuries*, 2 vols., 1904-1905.
- Jacquín, A. M. *Histoire de l'Eglise*, I: *L'Antiquité chrétienne*, Paris, 1929.
- Kidd, A. *History of the Church to A.D. 461*, Oxford, 1922, 3 vols.
- Kirsch, J.P. *Kirchengeschichte*, I: *Kirchengeschichte in der antiken griechisch-römischen Kulturwelt*, Freiburg in Bresgau, 1930.
- Krüger, G. *Handbuch der Kirchengeschichte*, I: *Das Altertum*, Tübingen, 1923.
- Lietzmann, H. *Geschichte der alten Kirche*, I: *Die Anfänge*, Berlin and Leipzig, 1932.
- Mourret, F. *Histoire de l'Eglise*, new edn., Paris, 1921, 9 vols.
- Müller, K. *Kirchengeschichte*, I Band, i *Lieferung* 1924, ii *Lieferung* 1927, iii *Lieferung* 1929, Tübingen.
- Poulet, C. *Histoire du Christianisme*, fasc. I-VI, Paris, 1932-1934.
- Renan, E. *Histoire des origines du christianisme* (Paris, 1861—), 8 vols.
- Rosenstock, E. and Wittig, J. *Das Alter der Kirche*, Berlin, 1908, 3 vols.
- Zellier, J. *L'Empire romain et l'Eglise*, Vol. VI of the *Histoire du monde*, published under the direction of E. Cavaignac, Paris, 1928.

We must add to this list the *Dictionnaire d'Archéologie chrétienne et de Liturgie*, by Dom F. Cabrol and Dom H. Leclercq (Dom Cabrol alone for the four first volumes), in course of publication, Paris, 1907—; the *Dictionnaire d'Histoire et de Géographie ecclésiastiques*, published under the direction of A. Baudrillart, A. Vogt and M. Rouzies, continued by A. de Meyer and E. van Cauwenbergh, in course of publication, Paris, 1912—; the *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, begun under the direction of A. Vacant and continued under that of E. Mangenot and E. Amann, in course of publication, Paris, 1909—; the *Dictionnaire apologétique de la foi catholique*, 4th edn., under the direction of



A. d'Alès, 4 vols. and Tables, Paris, 1911-1931; the *Lexicon für Theologie und Kirche* under the direction of Buchberger, in course of publication, Freiburg in Bresgau, 1930—; the *Realencyclopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche*, 3rd edn., under the direction of A. Hauck, 24 vols., Leipzig, 1896-1913; *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 2nd edn. by H. Gunkel and L. Zscharnack, 5 vols., Tübingen, 1927-1932; *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, under the direction of J. Hastings, 13 vols., Edinburgh, 1908-1926.

On the history of dogma, see: J. Tixeront, *Histoire des dogmas*, I, *La théologie antenicéenne*, 11th edn., Paris, 1930; II, *De saint Athanase à saint Augustin*, 9th edn., Paris, 1931; III, *La fin de l'âge patristique*, 8th edn., Paris, 1928; Harnack, A., *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, I. *Entstehung des kirchlichen Dogmas*, 4th edn., Tübingen, 1909; English translation: *History of Dogma*, 1894—. Loofs, F. *Leitfaden zum Studium der Dogmengeschichte*, 4th edn., Halle, 1906.

## BOOK II

*From the Death of St. John  
to the End of the  
Second Century*

NIHIL OBSTAT:

REGINALDUS PHILLIPS, S.T.L.  
*Censor deputatus*

IMPRIMATUR

E. MORROGH BERNARD  
*Vic. Gen.*

WESTMONASTERII  
*die 28a Juli, 1944*

## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

*The welcome extended to the first book of this History has encouraged the continuation of the work. It will be completed in four books, and an Index to the whole will be given at the end of the fourth book.*

*The present book carries on the story from the death of St. John to the end of the second century.*

*The principles governing citations from the Scriptures, and from ecclesiastical writers, are the same as those adopted for the first book. Notes within brackets have been added by me on my own responsibility.*

ERNEST C. MESSENGER

CHRISTIAN LIFE AT THE END OF  
THE FIRST CENTURY<sup>1</sup>

## § I. CHRISTIAN LIFE AND WORSHIP

REJECTED by the synagogue and persecuted by the Roman Empire, the Church nevertheless developed an intense interior life. From the first, this life calls for the admiration of the historian by reason of its overflowing plenitude, but precisely because of its richness it seems to defy all description. Attempts have been made to grasp this exuberance by describing successively the various aspects of the new-born Christianity. In this way, Harnack, in his *Mission and Expansion of Christianity*, has studied, in a series of chapters, the Gospel of Love and Charity, the religion of the Spirit and of Power, of Moral Earnestness and Holiness, the Religion of Authority and of Reason, of the Mysteries and of Transcendentalism, the Tidings of the New People, the Religion of a Book and a Historical Realisation, the Conflict with Polytheism and Idolatry.<sup>2</sup> All these developments are of interest, and bring into the light some characteristics of primitive Christianity. However, as we are not able here to enter into detail, we would prefer to study the principle of unity from which all the rest proceeds. We know that Harnack, in his *Essence of Christianity*, thought he could trace everything back to the religion of God the Father. It seems to us that, during the apostolic period, Christianity is above all the religion of the Christ.<sup>3</sup> This may seem a truism, but nevertheless it deserves to be considered attentively: it is indeed the distinctive character of this religion, and the secret of its power.

<sup>1</sup> Bibliography—P. Batiffol, *L'Eglise naissante et le catholicisme*, 9th edn., Paris 1927 (English tr.: *Primitive Catholicism*, London, 1911); J. Lebreton, *La vie chrétienne au premier siècle de l'Eglise*, Paris, 1927; E. Amann, *L'Eglise des premiers siècles*, Paris, 1927; Dom Cabrol, *La prière des premiers chrétiens*, Paris, 1929; G. Bardy, *L'Eglise à la fin du premier siècle*, Paris, 1932.

<sup>2</sup> All these chapters form Book II of *Mission und Ausbreitung*, pp. 111-331.

<sup>3</sup> This does not mean that the emphasis on Christ caused the Father to be forgotten; quite the contrary. Hence we are entirely opposed to the extreme thesis of A. C. MacGiffert, *The God of the Early Christians*, New York, 1924.

*The Religion of the Christ*

Already in the early days at Jerusalem, the conflict centred round this point. The Sanhedrin forbade the apostles to preach in the name of Jesus; Peter replied that there was no other saving name. Later on, when the procurator Festus wished to inform King Agrippa as to the case against St. Paul, he told him that it concerned "one Jesus deceased, whom Paul affirmed to be alive" (*Acts* xxv, 19). Tacitus himself, whose information is limited, nevertheless speaks correctly when he thus defines Christianity: "He who gave His name to this sect, the Christ, was put to death. . . ."; and Suetonius in turn, speaking of the Edict of Claudius, expresses himself thus: "The Jews caused disturbances, under the impulse of a certain Chrestus."

And what the earliest adversaries perceived appears clearly in the first Christian preaching: "God has made him Lord and Christ"; "He raised him up": that is what Peter affirmed from the first days at Jerusalem, Paul at Antioch in Pisidia, at Athens and everywhere else. Doubtless, when he was preaching to pagans, the apostle had first of all to preach to them the One God and to draw them away from their idols; but he at once went on to Christ, to His resurrection, and to His second coming, even at the risk of being abandoned by his sceptical hearers.

At the same time that Christ is the central object of faith, He is also the Saviour in whom every man must hope. The prize which the apostles set forth constantly to those they wish to win is the forgiveness of sins and salvation through Christ. Such is the theme of St. Peter's sermon on Pentecost day (*Acts* ii, 38), and in his speeches on his two appearances before the Sanhedrin (*ibid.*, iv, 12; v, 31); it is also the theme of St. Paul's homily at Antioch in Pisidia (xiii, 38). This is the echo of the appeal which Jesus himself made to his hearers, and through them, to all men: "Come to me, all you that labour, and are burdened, and I will refresh you" (*Matt.* xi, 28). Later on Celsus will write with indignation: "Those who endeavour to win followers for the other mysteries, say: 'Let him whose hands are pure . . . enter here!' . . . But we hear these people on the contrary cry: 'Whosoever is a sinner, foolish, simple or miserable, will receive the kingdom of God.'"<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Quoted by Origen, III, 59.

Those who have thus been won and redeemed belong no longer to themselves; they belong to the Lord:

"None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and rose again; that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living" (*Rom. xiv, 7-9*).

"You are not your own, for you are bought with a great price" (*I Cor. vi, 19-20*).<sup>5</sup>

Christianity is not only a new condition of life: it is a new life. By baptism, Christians are buried with Christ in death, and raised again with him to life.<sup>6</sup> And they do not rise again as isolated individuals, but as members of the body of Christ, the Church: "We were all baptised into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether bond or free."<sup>7</sup> And this life-giving primacy of Christ extends not only to the Church which He sanctifies, but also to the whole world of which He is the Ruler and the Head:

"All things were created by him and in him. And he is before all, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the Church, who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things he may hold the primacy, because in him, it hath well pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell, and through him to reconcile all things unto himself, making peace through the blood of his cross, both as to the things that are on earth, and the things that are in heaven" (*Col. i, 16-20*).

All this is not mere speculation, for it governs the whole of the Christian life. The Church is the body of Christ; all its functions are produced in it by the action of the Head who dispenses its life (*Ephes. iv, 11-16*). The sacraments are set forth only in this light: baptism is the burial and resurrection with Christ; marriage is a union representing that of Christ and the Church (*Ephes. v, 25-32*); the Eucharist above all, which is the centre of all worship and

<sup>5</sup> To make his thought better understood, St. Paul employs the very terms used to signify sacred manumissions: just as the slaves who wished to put their newly acquired liberty under the patronage of a god had to be purchased by him by a fictitious sale, so also, but this time in reality, the Christian has been redeemed by Christ to be free: *I Cor. vii, 23; Gal. v, 1-19*. Cf. *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité*, I, p. 406.

<sup>6</sup> *Rom. vi, 3-11; Col. ii, 12; iii, 4*.

<sup>7</sup> *I Cor. xii, 13; cf. xii, 27; Rom. xii, 5; Col. i, 18; iii, 15; Ephes. iv, 4*.

the indispensable food of the Christian, is the representation of the death of the Lord, the participation of his body, the communion in his blood.<sup>8</sup>

Moral exhortations are inspired by this ever-present thought: we must flee fornication because our bodies are the members of Christ (*I Cor.* vi, 15); we must be generous, after the example of Christ, who being rich became poor (*II Cor.* viii, 9); we must forget ourselves in order to imitate Jesus Christ, who being in the form of God humbled himself and took the form of a slave (*Phil.* ii, 6-7); husbands must love their wives as Christ loved the Church (*Ephes.* v, 25); servants must be obedient to their masters as to Christ (*ibid.*, vi, 5). This constant reference to the highest mysteries in order to inculcate upon Christians fidelity to their duties, even the most humble ones, fills the whole of life with the memory of Christ and of his love.

These are a few of the very numerous features in which St. Paul's theology reveals the ineffaceable impress with which Christ had marked the apostle's life: "for me, to live is Christ" (*Phil.* i, 21).

The same impress is found in the other apostles, as for instance in this text of St. Peter, quoted already in the early years of the second century by St. Polycarp: <sup>9</sup> "Jesus Christ, whom having not seen, you love; in whom also now, though you see him not, you believe: and believing shall rejoice with joy unspeakable and glorified, receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls" (*I Pet.* i, 8-9). And further on: "Desire the rational milk without guile, that thereby you may grow unto salvation: if so be you have tasted that the Lord is sweet. Unto whom coming, as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen and made honourable by God" (ii, 2-4). And yet again: "Christ suffered for us, leaving you an example that you should follow his steps."<sup>10</sup>

We find the same note in the Johannine literature, the epistles<sup>11</sup> and the *Apocalypse*; Christians are the servants of Jesus (i, 1; xii, 20); the martyrs are the witnesses of Jesus (ii, 13); the closing sentence is the suppliant cry of the Church: "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!" (xxii, 20).

This last prayer brings home to us what it was that the Christians

<sup>8</sup> *I Cor.* x, 16-17; xi, 26-27.

<sup>9</sup> Letter to the Philippians, i, 3.

<sup>10</sup> ii 21; cf. iii 18; iv 1, 13, 14.

<sup>11</sup> It is sufficient to recall the commencement of the first epistle, i, 1-4.



desired when they awaited the Second Coming with such impatience: admittedly it was the triumph and coming of the Kingdom, but above all it was the coming and the definitive presence of the Son of God. Thus we read in the first letter to the Thessalonians (iv, 16): "So shall we be always with the Lord." Later on, when this perspective of the Second Coming was less prominent in the apostle's mind, the desire to be with Christ remained as active as ever (*Phil.* i, 23).

All this is clear, and yet too often it is overlooked. Thus, in the question of virginity, the apostle's counsels are manifestly inspired by the desire to belong wholly to the Lord without other cares: "He that is without a wife, is solicitous for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please God. But he that is with a wife, is solicitous for the things of the world, how he may please his wife, and he is divided" (*I Cor.* vii, 32-33). Accordingly numerous Protestant critics are wrong when they explain this counsel of the apostle as due solely to the expectation of an imminent Second Coming.<sup>12</sup>

### *The Sacraments*

The spiritual life is not purely individual; it is the life of members of the Body of Christ which is the Church. The latter is likewise not purely spiritual: it is maintained and expressed by material symbols. The old Protestant thesis which rejected the sacraments as late corruptions has been definitively condemned by history.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Thus Sabatier, *L'apôtre Paul*, p. 160: "On one single point the judgment of the apostle seems still narrow: I refer to celibacy. This narrowness, for which he has been so much reproached, does not at all arise from a dualistic asceticism. . . . What narrows and confines the apostle's judgment here are his eschatological opinions, The Second Coming is imminent; the time is short; all other interests disappear before this immediate future. But very soon there is a progress in this respect in Paul's thought. He succeeds in freeing himself from the narrow bonds of Jewish eschatology; in the epistles of the Captivity we shall see that he arrives at a wider and juster view of marriage and of domestic life." Certainly "the time is short," "the figure of this world passes away," and it is foolish to be too much attached to it; but the decisive motive is the desire to belong exclusively to the Lord.

<sup>13</sup> Let us recall, for instance, what Harnack wrote in *Mission und Ausbreitung*, p. 247: "To regard water, bread, and wine, as holy elements, to plunge into water in order that the soul may be washed and purified, to regard bread and wine as the Body and Blood of Christ, and as a food which confers immortality upon men's souls—this is a language which was well understood at that time. The dull-minded realist understood it, but the most sublime spiritualist did so equally.

It is true that sacramental theology has escaped the attacks of the Reformed theologians only to be a prey to the hypotheses of the historians of Comparative Religion. These new opponents recognise that the apostolic theology is wholly penetrated with the sacramental idea, but they see in this penetration a pagan influence which in their view dominated the Church from the beginning.

Catholic historians have continued the fight on this new ground, and nowadays scientific opinion agrees with them, even that of those who do not accept the Catholic faith: these recognise that the sacraments, and in particular, baptism and the Eucharist, which have been specially attacked, cannot, as was supposed, be explained by the influence of the pagan mysteries, and still less by the Mandæan liturgy.<sup>14</sup>

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The two most sublime spiritualists in the Church, John and Origen, became the most powerful exponents of the mysteries, and the great Gnostic theologians linked their most abstract theological theorems to realist mysteries; they were all theologians of sacraments. . . . The phrase of the later scholastics, 'sacramenta continent gratiam,' is as old as the Church of the Gentiles; it is even older than that; it existed long before her." Again, p. 252: "Read the stories concerning the Supper told by Dionysius of Alexandria, a disciple of Origen, or what Cyprian narrates concerning the miracles of the Host. . . . It is objected *Ab initio sic non erat*. That may be so, but one would have to go back very far—so far, in fact, that this very brief period cannot be discovered by us."

<sup>14</sup>On this question, consult L. de Granmaison, *Les mystères païens et le Mystère chrétien; Jésus Christ*, Vol. II, pp. 535-561; E. Jacquier, *Les mystères païens et saint Paul*, in *Dictionnaire apologetique*, Vol. III, col. 964-1014; on baptism, col. 1004-1008; on the Eucharist, col. 1008-1010; F. Prat, *Saint Paul et le paulinisme*, Vol. III, *Le paulinisme et les religions orientales hellénisées*, *ibid.*, Vol. III, col. 1047-1051.

The question of baptism has been specially dealt with from this point of view by J. Coppens' article, *Baptême*, in *Supplément à Dictionnaire de la Bible, Le baptême et les religions à mystères*, Vol. I, p. 883-886; *Mystères païens et baptême chrétien*, p. 903-924. This question of the Eucharist is dealt with by W. Goossens in *Les Origines de l'Eucharistie*, Gembloux, 1931, pp. 252-323.

The Mandæan hypothesis has been specially pressed by R. Reitzenstein, *Die Vorgeschichte der christlichen Taufe*, Leipzig, 1929, especially pp. 152-292. This hypothesis has been generally rejected, even by the independent critics; cf. H. Lietzmann, *Ein Beitrag zur Mandäerfrage*, in *Sitzungsberichte der Akad. Berlin*, 1930, pp. 596-608; A. Loisy, *Le Mandéisme et les origines chrétiennes*, 1934, especially pp. 104-141; Erich Fascher, art. *Taufe*, in Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopädie*, Vol. IV, A<sup>2</sup>, 1932, p. 2507; the influence of the pagan mysteries is similarly rejected, *ibid.*, pp. 2511-2512. On this last question see also A. von Stromberg, *Studien zur Theorie und Praxis der Taufe in der christlichen Kirche der ersten zwei Jahr hunderte*, Berlin, 1913, pp. 36-45, cf. pp. 125-126, and A. Schweitzer, *Die Mystik des Apostels Paulus*, Tübingen, 1930, pp. 27-41.

## Baptism

What we have said above concerning the life and teaching of Christ has enabled us to attain to the real origin of the sacraments, and in particular, of baptism and the Eucharist.<sup>15</sup> We saw how Jesus received the baptism of John (*Matt.* iii, 13-17), and that, when He began His public life, baptism was administered by His own disciples,<sup>16</sup> and that after the Resurrection He commanded his apostles to baptise all nations in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (*Matt.* xxviii, 19). This baptism was not a ritual ablution, like those to which the Jews were accustomed,<sup>17</sup> nor a baptism of penitence, like the baptism of John;<sup>18</sup> it was a new birth, by which the person baptised was regenerated "by water and the Holy Ghost."<sup>19</sup> It was thus that Jesus explained to Nicodemus the nature and effect of baptism, and this conception will remain familiar to the apostles and to the Church.<sup>20</sup> The mysteries of the death and resurrection of Christ put this transformation in a new light: by baptism the neophytes were incorporated into Christ, died with Him and rose again with Him; they died to the flesh, they rose again in the spirit; being members of Christ, living with His life, they were freed from the servitude of the old Adam. Doubtless the old man still lived in them, but he had been mortally wounded by

<sup>15</sup> The other sacraments appear already in the apostolic period, but we cannot give them a special treatment here; what we have to say later on concerning the primitive hierarchy will deal with Order and its chief degrees, the episcopate, priesthood and diaconate; Confirmation appears in the laying on of hands which completes the graces of baptism (*Acts* vii, 24); cf. J. Coppens, *L'imposition des mains*, pp. 174-248.

<sup>16</sup> *John* iii, 22; iv, 2. On the nature of this baptism, two different opinions have been held by the Fathers and theologians: some see in it only the baptism of John the Baptist; others regard it as Christian baptism. This second view is the more common. Cf. A. d'Alès, *De Baptismo*, Paris, 1927, p. 19, and art. *Baptême* in *Supplément to Dictionnaire de la Bible*, Vol. I, p. 858.

<sup>17</sup> On the baptism of proselytes and the other Jewish ablutions, cf. J. Coppens, art. *Baptême*, col. 892-894.

<sup>18</sup> John himself expressly recognised this: "I have baptized you with water; but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost" (*Mark* i, 8); "I indeed baptize you in water unto penance . . . he shall baptize you in the Holy Ghost and fire" (*Matt.* iii, 11); cf. *Luke* iii, 16.

<sup>19</sup> *John* iii, 5; cf. iii, 3, 7-8.

<sup>20</sup> *Tit.* iii, 5; *I Pet.* i, 3. Often again the new birth is set forth as a divine adoption; *John* i, 12-13; *Rom.* viii, 15-16; *Gal.* iii, 26-27; *I John* iii, 1-2; v. 18; or as a new creation: *Gal.* vi, 15; *Ephes.* ii, 10. On all these ideas cf. A. d'Alès, art. *Baptême*, col. 863-866.

baptism, and would be constantly mortified by faithful christians until death was swallowed up in life, and Christ was all in all.<sup>21</sup>

Baptism was indispensable for salvation. On Pentecost Day, the Jews, touched by the preaching of Peter, asked him: "What must we do?" "Do penance, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ" replied the apostle, and at the same time he promised them the fruits of baptism: the forgiveness of sins, and the gift of the Holy Spirit (*Acts* ii, 38). The converts of Samaria were baptised in the same way (viii, 12), also the Ethiopian eunuch (viii, 38), Saul (ix, 18), Cornelius the centurion and his household (x, 48), and indeed all the neophytes who appear in the apostolic history.

All were called to baptism: it was the Lord's command (*Matt.* xxviii, 19), and in the case of the centurion Cornelius, the Holy Ghost himself dispelled all hesitation. This principle was never questioned, even by the Judaisers.<sup>22</sup> In all candidates for baptism, faith was required; hence the custom, witnessed to already in apostolic times, of requiring from the candidates for baptism a profession of faith; this was the origin of the baptismal creed.<sup>23</sup> Every Christian, in order to be saved, had to confess with his mouth that Jesus was Lord, and believe with his heart that God had raised him from amongst the dead (*Rom.* x, 9); this profession of faith showed the adhesion of the neophyte to the traditional catechesis, such as that we find referred to, for instance, in the epistle to the Corinthians (*I Cor.* xv, 3 *et seq.*).

As to the rite of baptism in the apostolic age, the most explicit account we possess is the sixth chapter in the *Didache*:

"Baptize in the following manner: After saying all which precedes, baptize into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, in running water. If you have not running water, baptize in other water; and if you cannot baptize in cold water, baptize in warm. If both are lacking, pour some water thrice upon the head, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Before baptism,

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Bk. I, p. 262; D'Alès, art. *Baptême*, col. 866-868; Schweitzer, *Die Mystik des Apostels Paulus*, pp. 119-158; in this book this idea is developed with great force, but the author wrongly contrasts it with the conception of regeneration, which he thinks foreign to St. Paul, pp. 13-15 and 120-211.

<sup>22</sup> What they desired was not to keep the pagans from baptism, but to impose circumcision on them.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 146 *et seq.*; P. Feine, *Die Gestalt des apost. Glaubensbekenntnisses in der Zeit des N.T.*, Leipzig, 1925. We return to the baptismal creed later.

let the baptizer and the baptized fast, and other persons who are able; enjoin the baptized person to fast one or two days before.”<sup>24</sup>

### *The Eucharist*

The origin of the Eucharist is already known to us.<sup>25</sup> We know that Christ instituted at the Last Supper this living representation of His sacrifice, and commanded his apostles to “do this in memory of him.” Jesus was obeyed: the apostolic writings bear witness to the celebration of the Eucharist at Jerusalem and in the Pauline churches.<sup>26</sup>

This celebration is called in the accounts in the *Acts* (ii, 41-42; 46-47; xx, 7-11) the “breaking of bread.”<sup>27</sup> In the first days of

<sup>24</sup> Jacquier remarks on this passage: “This is the earliest mention we have of baptism by infusion; nevertheless it is likely that this was the most usual mode of baptism in apostolic times: the three thousand Jews who were converted by Peter’s sermon on Pentecost Day and were baptised (*Acts* ii, 41) must have been baptized thus. The same applies to the five thousand converts mentioned in *Acts* iv, 4, and to the Philippian jailor and his family baptized by St. Paul in the prison (*ibid.*, xvi, 33). It would also appear that the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch could not have been by complete immersion (*ibid.*, viii, 38)” (p. 194). This mention of baptism by infusion was suppressed when this text passed into the *Apostolic Constitutions*, vii, 22. Cf. St. Cyprian, ep. 69, 12-16, who had to defend the validity of baptism administered by infusion to the sick; and Cornelius, letter to Fabius of Antioch (*Hist. Eccles.*, vi, 43, 17), which says that those who had been thus baptized could not be admitted into the ranks of the clergy. At the date of these various documents, the construction of the baptismal piscinas had caused baptism by infusion to fall into desuetude for a time, and it was practised only in the case of the sick.

On baptism for the dead mentioned in *I Cor.* xv, 29, cf. Prat, *Theology of St. Paul*, Vol. I, p. 136: “A curious usage existed in Corinth and probably also in other Christian communities. When a catechumen died before being far enough advanced as to be baptized, one of his relatives or friends received for him the ceremonies of the sacrament. What precise signification was attached to this act? It is difficult to say. St. Paul neither approves nor condemns it; he treats it only as a profession of faith in the resurrection of the dead.” See also Père Allo, O.P., *I Ep. aux Corinthiens*, Paris, 1934, pp. 411-13.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Bk. I, pp. 143-5.

<sup>26</sup> The apostolic texts relating to the Eucharist have been conveniently collected together by W. B. Frankland in *The Early Eucharist*, London, 1902, pp. 3-11, and less completely by G. Rauschen, *Florilegium Patristicum*, Vol. VII, *Monumenta Eucharistica et Liturgica vetustissima*, Bonn, 1909. A detailed and exact interpretation of the texts will be found in W. Goossens, *Les origines de l’Eucharistie*, Gembloux, 1931, especially pp. 147-174.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Goossen, *op. cit.*, pp. 172-173. Jacquier, in his commentary, recognises the eucharistic reference in the first and third texts, but not in the second; Goossens writes, apparently more correctly: “The breaking of bread in two passages so close to one another and having the same subject must have the same meaning in the two cases.”

the Church at Jerusalem, the faithful were "persevering in the doctrine of the apostles, and in the communication of the breaking of bread and in prayers" (ii, 42); "continuing daily with one accord in the Temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they took their meat with gladness and simplicity of heart" (ii, 46). This brief description indicates, side by side with the Eucharist, a common meal which probably took place at the same time.<sup>28</sup> This meal was certainly the custom at Corinth; but there it had led to abuses which St. Paul corrected:

"When you come therefore together into one place, it is not now to eat the Lord's supper. For every one taketh before his own supper to eat. And one indeed is hungry and another is drunk."<sup>29</sup>

The apostle, in order to put an end to these abuses, writes:

"Wherefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. If any man be hungry, let him eat at home; that you come not together unto judgment."<sup>30</sup>

Again, we have the Supper celebrated at Troas by St. Paul: it was the first day of the week (Sunday); the faithful were gathered together for the breaking of bread. Paul, who was to depart the next day, was speaking to the brethren; he continued his discourse until midnight. In the upper room in which the meeting was taking place, many lamps were lit; in the course of the apostle's long discourse, a young man named Eutychius went to sleep; he fell from the third floor to the ground, and was picked up dead. Paul went down, took him in his arms, and brought him to life again; then he went back, broke bread, ate, and conversed with the brethren until daybreak (*Acts* xx, 7-11).

The vigil was exceptionally prolonged on that occasion because of the imminent departure of the apostle, but this fact did not make any change in the character of this liturgical assembly: the breaking of bread was its central feature; it took place on the Sunday, the day especially assigned for the celebration of the Eucharist.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>28</sup> It seems to me that this is wrongly contested by Goossens, *op. cit.*, p. 134; but it does not follow that this meal was the agape. The agape is certainly attested for the end of the second century; nothing justifies us in affirming its use in the first century. Cf. Goossens, pp. 127-146.

<sup>29</sup> *I Cor.* xi, 20-21. Cf. Bk. I, p. 246.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 33-34. It seems to follow from this text that the Christian assembly ought to be exclusively eucharistic, and that all other meals were to be banished from it (Goossens, *op. cit.*, pp. 138-141).

<sup>31</sup> Cf. *I Cor.* xvi, 2; *Didache* xiv, 1; Goossens, *op. cit.*, p. 172, n. 6.

These few texts enable us to see how from the time of the apostles the command of the Lord: "Do this in memory of me" was carried out; and already we recognise here the outline of the liturgy which was very shortly to develop. Some have endeavoured to distinguish between two different types of apostolic Eucharist: they suggest that in the accounts in the Acts concerning Jerusalem and Troas, we have a brotherly meal, a symbol of the union of Christians with each other and with Jesus; in the epistle to the Corinthians we have a sacrificial meal, wholly penetrated with the memory of the death of the Lord.<sup>32</sup> This hypothesis is an arbitrary one, and is contradicted by the texts of St. Paul; the apostle, far from being aware of innovating in any way in this matter, appeals expressly to the tradition which he has received and transmitted;<sup>33</sup> he himself moreover sets forth the double aspect of the eucharistic mystery, the sacrifice (*I Cor.* x, 16-21) and the mystery of union (*ibid.*, 17; cf. *Rom.* xii, 5).

But though from the first we see only one Eucharist, we can distinguish already in the eucharistic doctrine the trace of the two great dogmas of the Incarnation and the Redemption. The Son of God present in us, uniting us to himself and to our brethren, is what St. John brings out above all in the two discourses of Christ at Capernaum and after the Last Supper; the Son of God who died for us and unites us to His sacrifice is what St. Paul chiefly dwells upon. And from that time onwards in the whole history of eucharistic theology, we can follow these two doctrinal currents; they will never be isolated from each other, but they will lead theologians to contemplate by preference either our life-giving union with the "bread which has come down from heaven," or else our participation in his death, in the communion of the "blood of the testament."<sup>34</sup>

<sup>32</sup> This thesis has been maintained by H. Lietzmann, *Messe und Herrenmahl*, Bonn, 1926, pp. 238-263. Cf. *Recherches de science religieuse*, 1927, pp. 330-333.

<sup>33</sup> *I Cor.* xi, 23. On this text, cf. the article *Eucharistie* in the *Dictionnaire apologétique*, col. 1552 et seq. Also Allo, *op. cit.*, pp. 302-16.

<sup>34</sup> Already in the *Didache* we can recognise, in the eucharistic prayers, this double influence, Pauline and (above all) Johannine.

§ 2. THE PRIMITIVE HIERARCHY<sup>1</sup>*Peter and the Twelve*

In our account of the life of Jesus, we found around him a group of twelve apostles.<sup>2</sup> These were chosen by Him, formed by Him, sent by Him, and invested with the powers of teaching and government which constituted them the heads of the Church here below,<sup>3</sup> and in heaven the judges of mankind.<sup>4</sup> After His Resurrection, the Lord confirmed these privileges to the apostles, gave them the Holy Spirit, and sent them forth to convert and baptize all nations.<sup>5</sup>

Amongst these twelve apostles, we saw that Peter was the first (*Matt.* x, 2). It was on him in the first place that the Church rested as on an unshakable rock; it was he who, before the other apostles, received the power of binding and loosing (*Matt.* xvi, 16-19); it was he who, after the Resurrection, was once more singled out by Jesus from the apostolic group, and charged with the feeding of the lambs and the sheep (*John* xxi, 15-19).

Thus, even before founding the Church by His death and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, Jesus revealed the plan of the building He intended to construct: the Christian Church was to be a hierarchical society, taught and governed by the apostles, with Peter at their head.

In point of fact, that is how the Church appears, from the first day, in the Upper Room. The Twelve formed a privileged group, in which the defection of Judas left a gap; this gap had to be filled; Peter took the initiative in the election of Matthias and directed it (*Acts* i, 15-26). On Pentecost Day it was Peter who, assisted by the eleven, explained to the people the mystery of the Spirit (ii, 14), and told the converts what they had to do (ii, 37); three thousand people were converted, and "were persevering in the doctrine of the apostles, and in the communication of the breaking of bread, and in prayers" (ii, 42). It was at the feet of the apostles that the Christians laid down the price of the possessions which they gave up (iv, 35-37; v, 2). Thus, all power was committed to their hands; their manifold cares became too absorbing, and the apostles, in order to devote themselves to the ministry of prayer and the word

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Batiffol, *Primitive Catholicism*; Michiels, *L'origine de l'Episcopat*, Louvain, 1900; Harnack, *Entstehung und Entwicklung der Kirchenverfassung und des Kirchenrechts in den zwei ersten Jahrhunderten*, Leipzig, 1910.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Bk. I, pp. 98-100.

<sup>3</sup> *Matt.* xvi, 16-19; xviii, 17-18.

<sup>4</sup> *Matt.* xix, 27-30; *Luke* xxii, 28-30.

<sup>5</sup> *John* xx, 21-22; *Matt.* xxviii, 18-20.



of God, caused seven deacons to be chosen for the ministry of tables (vi, 2 *et seq.*). These deacons also assisted the apostles in preaching, whether at Jerusalem (as Stephen) or elsewhere (as Philip).

In this group of apostles which so clearly asserted its authority from these first years, there was one leader who dominated all the rest by his supreme authority: Peter. We have seen this in the election of Matthias and in the great manifestations on Pentecost day; we shall find it again in all the events which follow: in the Temple, where he goes with John, it is he who addresses the word to the lame man, heals him, and speaks to the people (iii, 14, *et seq.*); before the Sanhedrin, it is he who speaks (iv, 7; v, 29); when Ananias and Sapphira try to conceal the price of their field, it is he who rebukes and condemns them (v, 1 *et seq.*). The Apostles, says Luke, performed great miracles; then he becomes more explicit: the sick were placed in Peter's path, so that at least his shadow might fall on them (v, 15). Peter and John are sent to Samaria; it is Peter who addresses the people (viii, 20). The decisive step in missions to the pagans, the baptism of the centurion Cornelius, is the work of Peter (x). When in the Council of Jerusalem the conditions of admission of pagans into the Church are being discussed, it is Peter who speaks first, and his opinion prevails (xv, 7).

This prominent situation of St. Peter, so manifest in the first chapters of the Acts, is less apparent in the rest of the narrative, because St. Paul is the chief centre of interest; but even there, the unparalleled authority of the head of the apostles is shown in the steps taken by St. Paul; in the care he takes to put himself in touch with Peter (*Gal.* i, 18), in the rank he assigns to Peter amongst the witnesses of the Resurrection of Jesus (*I Cor.* xv, 5), in the way, even, in which a small group of Corinthians try to abuse the respected name of Peter (*I Cor.*, i, 12).<sup>6</sup>

### *Authority and the Spirit*

These powers of jurisdiction and teaching conferred upon St. Peter and the other apostles, are gifts of the Holy Spirit, charisms, ordained for the good of the Church. Of all the functions of the

<sup>6</sup> All this is not contradicted or even obscured by the incident at Antioch; cf. Bk. I, p. 195. But from this incontestable primacy of St. Peter, one must not infer that his relations towards the other apostles were the same as those of the Pope towards other bishops. The Apostles received from Christ the power of universal jurisdiction, and the assurance of a personal infallibility in doctrine, privileges which they did not transmit to the bishops who succeeded them.

members of the body of Christ, the apostolate is the highest, but like the others, it derives its origin from a divine grace, and it has as its object the well-being of the body:

"Christ gave some apostles, and some prophets, and other some evangelists, and other some pastors and doctors, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (*Ephes.* iv, 11-12).

This double character, spiritual and hierarchical, is essential to the Church; this indissoluble union of authority and charism is manifest not only in the doctrine of St. Paul, but also in the facts, and that from the first day of the Church, and even before Pentecost. When the risen Jesus appears to His apostles and gives them power to bind and to loose, He says to them at the same time: "Receive the Holy Spirit" (*John* xx, 22). The highest exercise of the apostolic ministry is the gift of the Spirit; it appears at Pentecost (ii, 6-13) and later at Samaria (viii, 14), Cæsarea (x, 44), and Ephesus (xix, 6). To those who ask Paul for a letter of recommendation in proof of his apostolate, he replies: "You are our epistle, written in our hearts, which is known and read by all men: being manifested, that you are the epistle of Christ, ministered by us, and written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not in tables of stone, but in the fleshly tablets of the heart" (*II Cor.*, iii, 2-3).

Protestant writers may endeavour to oppose the Church of authority to the Church of the Spirit;<sup>7</sup> this opposition does violence to the history of Christian origins, and especially to the conception of the apostolate as this appears in the Gospels, Acts, and above all in the epistles of St. Paul.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> This is the thesis of the posthumous work of Auguste Sabatier, *Les religions d'autorité et la religion de l'esprit*, Paris, 1904.

<sup>8</sup> The apostolate is a charism: the apostle must have seen the Lord (*I Cor.* ix, 1-2) and have received a direct call from Christ (*Gal.* i, 1; *Acts* xiii, 2; cf. i, 26); his ministry is proved by its fruitfulness in grace and charisms (*I Cor.* ix, 2; *II Cor.* iii, 3; xii, 12). But this charism of the apostolate confers an authority which the apostle exercises; even the spiritual gifts, the most divine and most independent element seemingly in Christianity, are regulated by the apostle (*I Cor.* xii). He also regulates the celebration of the Supper, and corrects abuses in it (*ibid.*, xi, 34); by his own authority he defines the duties of married people (*ibid.*, vii, 12); he excommunicates the incestuous man (ix, 3); he sends Timothy, who will make known to the Corinthians what the apostle teaches in all the churches, and he adds: "What will you? Shall I come to you with a rod; or in charity, and in the spirit of meekness?" (iv, 17-21).

But if it be true that Jesus decided to found a Church which would endure as long as the world itself, and if He promised to His apostles to be with them, even "till the consummation of the world," it must surely be true that these essential characters of the Church, spiritual and hierarchical, will not disappear at the death of the apostles, and that these first leaders will have successors.

### *The Deacons*

Besides the apostolic office, we see appearing from the first years of the Church others which, like the apostolate, have their origin in a divine call, and whose object is the building up of the body of Christ; in these also we find the union of charism and authority. Such are in the first place the deacons: we have seen that the apostles instituted these in order to hand on to them the ministry of tables which had become too absorbing;<sup>9</sup> the people chose the seven, and the apostles ordained them by prayer and the laying on of hands.

In addition to the humble serving of tables, the apostles entrusted to the deacons the ministry of preaching; and St. Stephen, the first and best known of the seven, showed himself to be a man "full of grace and power"; the Holy Ghost spoke and acted in him with an irresistible force; his opponents could silence him only by slaying him.

### *The Presbyters*

A little later (*Acts* xi, 30) we find in the Church of Jerusalem some "presbyters," but we do not know when or in what way they were instituted in the community. On the occasion of the famine foretold by the prophet Agabus, the Church of Antioch sent help to the church of Jerusalem; it sent alms by Barnabas and Saul to the presbyters. In an earlier episode (iv, 35) we saw that those who yielded up their possessions to the community laid the price of them at the feet of the apostles; thus we find here again the passing on to new officials of a ministry of which the apostles at first were in charge. And for the presbyters as for the deacons, the administrative charge went hand in hand with a spiritual ministry: at the Council of Jerusalem they deliberated and decided with the

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Bk. I, p. 177; and *Acts* vi.

apostles;<sup>10</sup> in 57, when St. Paul arrived at Jerusalem with the alms of his churches, he presented himself to James, who was surrounded by all the presbyters (xxi, 18).

These various incidents show us the important part played by the presbyters in the church of Jerusalem. To them we must add this precept which St. James gives in his epistle (v, 14):

"Is any man sick among you? Let him bring in the presbyters of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick man: and the Lord shall raise him up: and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him."

The presbyters referred to here are not merely notable and influential members of the community; they are ministers charged with a liturgical function and capable of conferring thereby spiritual graces.

Paul and Barnabas, when returning from their mission, instituted presbyters in every church (xiv, 23).<sup>11</sup> The same institution had taken place at Ephesus; the exhortation which Paul at Miletus gave to the presbyters of Ephesus brings out in full evidence their pastoral functions:

"Take heed to yourselves, and to the whole flock, wherein the Holy Ghost have placed you bishops, to rule the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. I know that, after my departure, ravening wolves will enter in among you, not sparing the flock. And of your own selves shall arise men speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, keeping in memory that for three years I ceased not with tears to admonish every one of you night and day" (*Acts* xx, 28-31).

The office of a presbyter, as set forth in this account and discourse, is the office of a pastor and a doctor. Moreover, here as in

<sup>10</sup> *Acts* xv, 2: the brethren of Antioch depute "Paul and Barnabas and certain others of the other side, to go up to the apostles and presbyters at Jerusalem"; when they arrive at Jerusalem, they are received "by the church, and by the apostles and presbyters (4); after the report of the two envoys, "the apostles and presbyters assembled to consider this matter" (6). Peter speaks, then Barnabas and Paul, then James. "Then it pleased the apostles and presbyters, with the whole Church, to send to Antioch . . . Judas and Silas" (22). These messengers took with them a decision which began thus: "The apostles and presbyters, brethren, to the brethren that are at Antioch . . ." (23). This decree was promulgated everywhere as "the decrees decreed by the apostles and presbyters who were at Jerusalem" (xvi, 4).

<sup>11</sup> Cf. *Bk. I*, p. 206.

Pisidia, but more explicitly, the presbyters have as their mission the continuance of the work of the apostle, and they are to take his place.

Lastly we must note that the same men whom St. Luke calls presbyters in his narrative (*Acts* xx, 17) are called bishops by St. Paul in his discourse (*Acts* xx, 28).<sup>12</sup>

In the first epistle of St. Peter, we find exhortations to presbyters very similar to those in the discourse of Paul at Miletus:

"The presbyters therefore that are among you I beseech, who am myself also a presbyter, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ. . . . Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking care of it, not by constraint, but willingly, according to God, not for filthy lucre's sake, but voluntarily; neither as lording it over your charges, but being made a pattern of the flock from the heart. And when the Prince of Pastors shall appear, you shall receive a never fading crown of glory. In like manner, ye young men, be subject to the presbyters" (v, 1-5).

In the pastoral epistles, St. Paul sets forth the virtues which he requires in presbyter-bishops (*I Tim.* iii, 2; *Tit.* i, 6); they must be irreproachable, sober, prudent, able to instruct others, husbands of one wife, and ruling well their own households; not brutal, arrogant, quarrelsome, or covetous.<sup>13</sup> These presbyters are to be established everywhere; their appointment belongs to the delegates of the apostle, Titus and Timothy, who are to lay hands on them (*I Tim.* iv, 14; *II Tim.* i, 6; cf. *Acts* xiv, 23). Nowhere is there any mention of an election by the people.

What is to be noted above all in these letters is the object of this institution, which is, as St. Clement will very soon define it, the continuation of the apostolic succession, the preservation and defence of the deposit.<sup>14</sup>

We have just collected from the apostolic writings the indications

<sup>12</sup> In his epistles, except the pastorals and the epistle to the Hebrews, Paul does not speak of "presbyters"; but he mentions some who preside (*I Thess.* v, 12; *Rom.* xii, 8); pastors and teachers (*Ephes.* iv, 11); bishops and deacons (*Phil.* i, 1). In three places in the Epistle to the Hebrews (xiii, 7, 17, 24) there are references to superiors. Note what is said in *I Tim.* v, 17 of presbyters who rule well. These *προεστώτες*, identified with the presbyters, seem identical also with the *προϊστάμενοι* of the epistles to the Thessalonians and Romans.

<sup>13</sup> In his letter to Timothy, he lays it down that the candidate must not be a neophyte (iii, 6); this condition is not found in the letter to Titus; we may infer that the church of Crete was too recent a foundation to make this condition feasible.

<sup>14</sup> *I Tim.* vi, 10; *II Tim.* i, 14; cf. *Tit.* iii, 10.

we find there concerning the primitive hierarchy, and especially concerning presbyters and bishops; we must now discuss the interpretation of these texts.

The presbyterate in the primitive Church was not merely a title of honour attributed to old age or for services rendered.<sup>15</sup> A presbyter became such by apostolic institution (*Acts* xiv, 23); and when one became a presbyter, he was invested with hierarchical and liturgical functions.<sup>16</sup> The "leaders," "presiding ones," "superiors" mentioned in the epistles of St. Paul are not distinguished from the presbyters; must they be distinguished from the bishops?

A distinction between bishops and presbyters in the apostolic Church is accepted by two groups of writers: some theologians, but only a small number,<sup>17</sup> and at the other extreme, a fair number of radical critics.<sup>18</sup> This thesis does not fit in at all well with the apostolic texts; presbyters and bishops there appear to be identical,<sup>19</sup> and they are understood in that sense by the best representatives of patristic exegesis, St. John Chrysostom<sup>20</sup> and St. Jerome.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Michiels, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

<sup>16</sup> *Acts* xx; *James* v, 14; and texts in pastoral epistles indicated above.

<sup>17</sup> Thus Franzelin, *De Ecclesia*, thesis 17.

<sup>18</sup> When Hatch gave his conferences in 1880, the identity of the two terms was universally accepted, as he pointed out (*The Organisation of the Early Church*, 1881, p. 39 and n. 1); his book was destined to reopen the question: by reason of the theory therein defended, he tended to separate the bishops (financial administrators) from the presbyters (members of the council or senate). Sohm (*Kirchenrecht*, p. 92) gives credit to Hatch for the differentiation introduced between these two terms, and he is right. Cf. Michiels, *op. cit.*, p. 134. J. Reville (*Origines de l'épiscopat*, p. 179) similarly writes: "All that we hope to have established is that the episcopate and presbyterate have distinct origins." This distinction will be found also in Harnack, *Entstehung und Entwicklung der Kirchenverfassung*, p. 44.

<sup>19</sup> *Acts* xx, 17-28; cf. *I Pet.* v, 5 (doubtful text); *Tit.* i, 5-7; *I Tim.* iii, 2; cf. v, 17.

<sup>20</sup> *Hom. I*, in *Phil.* Commenting on *Phil.* i, 1, he says: "What does this mean? Were there several bishops in one city? Not at all, but Paul gives this name to the priests, for until then the denomination was common." Cf. Michaels, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

<sup>21</sup> In *Tit.* i, 5 (Migne, P.L., XXVI, p. 562): "The same person is priest and also bishop, and before the time when, under the instigation of the devil, there arose parties in the Church, and it was said: 'I am of Paul, I am of Apollos, I am of Cephas,' the churches were governed by the council of priests. But when each one wanted those baptized by him to belong to him and not to Christ, it was decreed in the whole world that one of the priests should by election be set over the others, and that he should have the care of the whole Church and suppress the seeds of schism"; and he quotes in support of his view *Phil.* i, 1; *Acts* xx, 28; *Heb.* xiii, 17; *I Pet.* v, 1-2. In this passage of St. Jerome and in other texts in his works we find traces of his animosity against abuses of episcopal

Accepting this identification of presbyters and bishops, one last question presents itself: were the dignitaries designed by these two names bishops or simple priests? The second alternative seems the most likely;<sup>22</sup> so long as St. Paul was alive, he was "the sole pastor of the immense diocese which he had won to faith in Christ. Neither in Greece or Macedonia, Galatia, Crete or Ephesus was there during his lifetime any bishop other than himself and his delegates. . . . The churches in the jurisdiction of Paul were served by deacons and governed by a council of dignitaries named indifferently presbyters or bishops, under the ever watchful surveillance and the ever active guardianship of the founder or his substitutes."<sup>23</sup>

These "delegates" or "substitutes" of the Apostle were the recipients of the pastoral epistles, Titus and Timothy; they were associated by St. Paul in the government of the churches, and received from him the power to ordain deacons and priests; they were therefore certainly bishops; and thus we find in the Pauline Churches, as at Jerusalem, the three distinct orders of bishops, priests and deacons.<sup>24</sup>

We also grasp the motive and object of this institution: Paul feels that he is at the end of his course; he is very soon going to be poured out as a libation; he wants to ensure the perpetuity of his work; he entrusts it, with a full authority, to those whom he has long associated in his work.

This apostolic succession, already attested in the letters of St.

power; we can leave aside these features, and also what he says about the schism of Corinth, in which he finds the occasion for the distinction between bishops and priests. In his letter to Evangelus, *P.L.* XXII, 1193, he sets aside the hypothesis of a college of bishops distinct from the priests and superior to them: "Ac ne quis contentione in una Ecclesia plures episcopos fuisse contendat, audi et aliud testimonium, in quo manifestissime comprobatur eundem esse episcopum et presbyterum: *Tit. i, 5.*" On the authority of St. Jerome, cf. Petavius, *Hier.*, II, c. 4 and 5. In this work, Petavius adopts the opinion of St. Jerome; in his *Dissertations sur la dignité des évêques*, he had thought that the presbyter-bishops who governed the churches were true bishops; here he prefers to regard them as simple priests, amongst whom the apostles chose a president who became the bishop.

<sup>22</sup> The former alternative is chosen by Boudinhon, *Canoniste Contemporain*, 1901, pp. 390-392, and by Batiffol, *Etudes d'histoire et de théologie positive*, Vol. I, pp. 268-269; the latter by Michiels, *op. cit.*, pp. 218-230, and by Prat, *Theology of St. Paul*, Vol. I, p. 345, Vol. II, p. 306.

<sup>23</sup> Prat, *Theology of St. Paul*, Vol. II, p. 306, cf. Vol. I, p. 345: "These two terms are used indifferently to denote the same persons, and are applied to members of the second rank of the hierarchy—in other words, to priests."

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Medebielle, art. *Eglise* in *Supplement to Dict. de la Bible*, col. 658.

Paul, is expressly confirmed by the witness of St. Clement at the end of the first century:

"Christ comes from God, and the apostles come from Christ. . . . Having received the instructions of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and being fully convinced by his resurrection, the apostles . . . set out to announce the good news of the coming of the Kingdom of God. Preaching in country and cities, they tested in the Spirit their first fruits, and instituted them as bishops and deacons of the future believers" (xlii, 2-3).

"They appointed those of whom we have spoken, and then they laid down this rule, that when the latter should die, other approved men should succeed to their ministry. We do not think it right to reject from the ministry those who have been thus instituted by the apostles, or later by other eminent men<sup>25</sup> with the approbation of the whole Church" (xliv, 3).

This letter was written at the end of the reign of Domitian or at the beginning of that of Nerva (95-96). At that date St. John was returning from exile and taking up once more this apostolic ministry at Ephesus: "After the death of the tyrant," says Eusebius (*Ecclesiastical History*, III, 23, 6), "the apostle John left the island of Patmos and came to Ephesus: from thence he went whither he was called to the Gentiles in the neighbourhood, either in order thoroughly to establish churches there, or else to choose as clerics those who were designated by the Spirit."

We could wish to make these indications more precise by referring to the *Apocalypse*, and interpreting what is said there of the angels of the seven churches (i, 20 *et seq.*), but the symbolism of these chapters makes them difficult to interpret.<sup>26</sup> In the epistles of St. John (II and III) there seem to be traces of a conflict between the local authorities and the apostle, but from these fugitive allusions it would be dangerous to try to draw exact conclusions.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup> These "eminent men" are the disciples, such as Titus or Timothy, upon whom the apostles conferred, together with the episcopate, the power to institute and ordain bishops.

<sup>26</sup> Père Allo (*Apocalypse*, p. lxxv) sees in them the collective council rather than the prelates who preside over them; cf. p. 18. This is also the interpretation of Swete (p. 28), who sees in them the angel guardians of the churches, and hence a personification of the churches.

<sup>27</sup> Westcott writes in his Commentary (p. lvi): "Diotrephes . . . is able for a time to withstand an Apostle in the administration of his particular Church. On the other side, the calm confidence of St. John seems to rest on himself more than on his official power. His presence will vindicate his authority. Once more



## § 3. THE ORIGINS OF GNOSTICISM

The great Christian Gnostic systems appear only in the course of the second century; the writers of the Great Church who opposed these heretics regarded their theses as late deformations of Christian ideas,<sup>1</sup> and they were right. But Basilides and Valentinus had fore-runners, the Gnostics combatted by St. Ignatius of Antioch, St. Jude, St. Peter, St. John and St. Paul. Even before the preaching of Christianity, Gnosticism was already prevalent in Syria, Palestine, and Egypt; the episode of Simon Magus narrated in the *Acts of the Apostles* shows the remarkable diffusion of the Gnostic fancies.

### *Pagan Gnosticism*

Gnosticism, in point of fact, was a great religious movement before Christianity, to which it was opposed in its most profound tendencies. In the first centuries of our era, it invaded the whole Greco-Roman world, coming into collision with the Hellenic and Jewish religions before attacking Christianity.<sup>1a</sup> Its origin must be sought in the religious syncretism which, from the time of the conquests of Alexander, and still more since the Roman conquest, had mingled and fused together the Oriental cults. The name "gnosis" indicates the object aimed at: the knowledge, or rather the vision of God; it is a divine revelation which almost always

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the growth of the Churches is as plainly marked as their independence." Streeter (*Primitive Church*, London, 1929, pp. 84-89) thinks that the local episcopate, represented by Diotrefes, was held in check by the quasi metropolitan authority of the writer of the letters, who was Bishop of Ephesus. To attribute to metropolitans at this date so great an influence is an anachronism.

<sup>1</sup> Thus Clement of Alexandria, *Stromat.* VII, 17, 106: "The teaching of Our Lord during his life began with Augustus and finished towards the middle of the reign of Tiberius; the preaching of the Apostles, as far as the end of the ministry of Paul, finished under Nero; the heresiarchs, on the contrary, began very much later, in the time of the king Hadrian, and lasted until the epoch of Antoninus the Elder. For instance, Basilides. . . ." Similarly Hegesippus, quoted by Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.*, III, 32, 7: "In the time of the apostles, the Church remained, as it were, a pure virgin without spot; but after the death of the apostles, wicked error found the beginning of its organisation through the deceits of those who taught another doctrine."

<sup>1a</sup> I here summarize the chapter dealing with the origin of Gnosticism in *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 81-93, completing this at the same time by means of the works which have since 1928 thrown light on this obscure subject.

claims to be based upon some ancient message transmitted secretly by a chain of initiates; through this mysterious tradition, one is linked up with primitive peoples such as the ancient Egyptians, and through them, to the gods. Thus the hermetic books present themselves as revelations made to Hermes or received by him; others appeal to Asclepius. Similarly the Christian Gnostics place their revelations under the patronage of some apostle, or, often, of Mary Magdalene, who is supposed to have received them from the risen Christ before the Ascension.

Gnosticism claimed to be a doctrine of salvation as well as a revelation; it taught the soul how to free itself from the material world in which it is imprisoned, and to ascend once more towards the spiritual and luminous world from which it has fallen. This liberation is brought about by the communication of a heavenly revelation, accompanied often by magical formulas and rites. Participation in this gnosis is not accorded or even offered to all men; like the Mysteries, Gnosis is reserved for initiates, and this was one of its most powerful attractions.

The religious doctrine thus transmitted was characterised by a very marked dualism; matter is to be despised and hated. The supreme Deity is removed as far as possible from all contact with matter; the creation of the material world is ascribed either to an inferior deity or demiurge, or else to angels or *archontes*. Between the visible world and this god there are more or less numerous intermediaries; it is by these that the divine action is extended and abased as far as the material world, and it is also through them that the soul is able to elevate itself step by step up to the supreme deity.

These ideas admit of being adapted to many different religions or mythologies: thus in the hermetic books, the same office of the revealing and saving deity is attributed to the Logos (Book I), to the Eon (Book XI), to Agathodæmon (Book XII), and to the Sun (Book XVI). The ascent of the soul, which passes successively through the seven planetary spheres, giving the password to the *archontes* and becoming transformed into the image of the angels it meets, is a common theme which is found, with more or less marked variants, in pagan, Jewish and Christian Gnostics. The Naassene Gnostics spoken of by Hippolytus<sup>2</sup> laid claim to a secret revelation which James, the Lord's brother, is supposed to have en-

<sup>2</sup> *Philos.*, V, 6-11.

trusted to Mariamne; but at the same time they were initiated into the mysteries of the Great Mother (v, 9-10), and they repeated two hymns to Attis which they had learnt there.

### *Simon Magus*

This elasticity which is capable of adaptation to all religions appears already in the Gnosticism of Simon Magus, which preceded Christianity and became its rival, and later on endeavoured more and more to assimilate its theology.<sup>3</sup>

When Philip the Deacon arrived at Samaria, he found the town led away by Simon:

"There was a certain man named Simon, who before had been a magician in that city, seducing the people of Samaria, giving out that he was some great one; to whom they all gave ear, from the least to the greatest, saying: 'This man is the power of God which is called Great.' And they were attentive to him, because for a long time he had bewitched them with his magical practices" (*Acts viii, 9-11*).

Simon nevertheless had himself baptized by Philip. When Peter and John arrived, he tried to buy with silver the power of conferring the Holy Spirit. Peter rebuked him severely; Simon seemed to be penitent and humble. The New Testament says no more about him, but later works enable us to follow the development of the sect. St. Justin, who came from Nablus and knew well his compatriots, relates that "almost all the Samaritans, and a few men in the other nations, acknowledged Simon and adored him as the supreme God."<sup>4</sup>

This Gnosticism thus progressively exalted its hero: first of all it saw in him only an intermediate divinity, the great Power of God; then it adored him as the supreme deity. At the end of the second century, Irenæus showed this Gnosticism endeavouring to adapt itself to the Trinitarian dogma: "Simon claims to have descended amongst the Jews as the Son, in Samaria as the Father, and in the other nations as the Holy Spirit."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> On Simon Magus, cf. the studies of Hans Waite, *Simon Magus in der altchristlichen Literatur*, in *Zeitschrift für N.T.W.*, Vol. V, 1904, pp. 121-148, and Lucien Cerfaux, in *Recherches de Science religieuse* Vol. XV, 1925, pp. 489-511; Vol. XVI, 1926, pp. 5-20, pp. 265-285, and pp. 481-503.

<sup>4</sup> *Apol.*, I, XXVI, 3; cf. LVI, 1-2. Justin was mistaken concerning the supposed statue to Simon in Rome, but we can accept his witness concerning the religion of the Samaritans and the cult which they gave to Simon.

<sup>5</sup> *Haer.*, I, 23.

Besides this supreme deity, a goddess named Helena was also honoured. This cult seems to have arisen at Tyre, where the Moon (Selena or Helena) was associated with the worship of the Sun; the Simonian Gnostics identified this goddess with Wisdom, while the Alexandrian Gnostics regarded her as Isis.

The Clementines and the *Acts of Peter* describe a struggle between St. Peter and Simon Magus, first in Syria and then at Rome.<sup>6</sup> In these creations of the imagination we can discern the memory of the bitter opposition of Gnosticism to Christianity, from Syria to Rome.

### *Gnosticism in the Apostolic Churches*

Between the Simonian Gnosticism and Christianity there could only be an ineluctible opposition. The danger of contamination could be greater when the Gnosticism which attacked Christianity was less openly pagan, and when it took the appearance of a Christian or Judaizing sect. Such was more generally the Gnosticism against which the apostolic writings reacted.

At the beginning, St. Paul had to defend himself above all against attacks from without; the opponents he had in view were usually Jews or Judaisers, as for instance, in the Epistle to the Galatians. But very soon there arose heretics from the very bosom of the Church; the earliest epistles hardly mention them, but from the time of the captivity, the controversy occupies a much larger place in the theology of the apostle. "The letters to the Colossians and Ephesians—the latter, more especially, exhibit an advanced stage in the development of the Church. The heresies, which the Apostle here combats, are no longer the crude, materialistic errors of the early childhood of Christianity, but the more subtle speculations of its maturer age. The doctrine which he preaches is not now the 'milk for babes' but the 'strong meat' for grown men. . . . These epistles bridge the gulf which separates the Pastoral letters from the Apostle's earlier writings. The heresies of the Pastoral letters are the heresies of the Colossians and Ephesians grown rank and corrupt."<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> On this combat in the *Acts of Peter*, cf. Vouaux, *Les Actes de Pierre*, 1902, pp. 100-109, and on the Clementine romance, C. Schmidt, *Studien zu den Pseudo-Clementinen*, 1929, pp. 47-66, and Chapman in *Catholic Encyclopædia*, Vol. IV. An English translation of the *Acts of Peter* will be found in M. R. James, *Apocryphal New Testament*, Oxford, 1924, pp. 300-36.

<sup>7</sup> Lightfoot, *Philippians*, p. 45.

If we endeavour to trace from the apostolic writings an outline of the kind of Gnosticism which then threatened Christianity, we can perceive the following features:

(a) *Dualism*, which showed itself by contempt for the flesh; this led to a denial of the resurrection (*I Cor.* xv, 12), or to its being understood in a figurative sense, probably of baptism (*II Tim.* v, 18). From this principle divergent moral inferences were drawn: sometimes in a libertine sense: everything is allowed, because all that is fleshly is to be despised (*I Cor.* vi and x; *Apoc.* ii, 14; *II Pet.* ii, 10; *Jude* 8); sometimes, on the contrary, in the sense of a rigid asceticism, forbidding contacts deemed impure, also certain foods, and marriage (*Col.* ii, 16-21; *I Tim.* iv, 3).

(b) *Ambitious speculations*, including supposed visions or imaginations concerning the angels; <sup>8</sup> delighting in genealogies (*Tit.* iii, 9), and in "cunningly devised fables" (*II Pet.* i, 16).

(c) These resulted in *putting Christ below the angels* (*Col.* xxx), or even denying him altogether (*I John* ii, 29; *II Pet.* ii, 1; *Jude* 4). Many who did not go so far as this radical denial rejected the reality of the Incarnation: Jesus Christ had not come in the flesh. This Docetism was combatted above all by St. John, and soon afterwards by St. Ignatius.

(d) These heretics were *mainly Jews*, who claim to be doctors of the law (*Tit.* i, 10; *I Tim.* i, 7; *Apoc.* ii, 9). In the second letter of St. Peter, we find them appealing also to the authority of St. Paul (*II Pet.* i, 20; iii, 16). Some <sup>9</sup> have at times tried to reduce all this Gnosticism to a radical Paulinism; this is an insufficient explanation: Gnosticism arose above all from the speculations which were at that time widespread in Judaism and Hellenism; these attacked Christianity as they attacked every living religion; they were eliminated by it after a long struggle. This struggle was, however, not fruitless; it gave to church authority more vigour, and to dogma greater precision. The study of the apostolic Fathers, and particularly of St. Ignatius, will soon show this.

<sup>8</sup> These errors are above all combatted in *Col.* ii. Cf. A. L. Williams, *The Cult of the Angels at Colossæ*, in *Journal of Theol. Studies*, Vol. XI, 1909, pp. 413-438.

<sup>9</sup> E.g., MacGiffert, *History of Christianity in the Apostolic Age*, 1897, pp. 502 et seq.

THE PROPAGATION OF CHRISTIANITY<sup>1</sup>

WHILE Christianity was developing its interior life, it was continuing its territorial expansion. The persecution which broke out suddenly and cost SS. Peter and Paul their lives, did not arrest and indeed scarcely hindered the diffusion of the Christian Faith.

§ I. THE EVANGELISATION OF THE  
ROMAN WORLD*The First Propagation of Christianity in Italy*

When persecution broke out under Nero, only to die down, and then to be revived for a first time some thirty years later under Domitian, Christianity had already secured a strong footing in the capital of the Empire. St. Paul when landing in Italy had, before arriving in Rome, found Christians at Puteoli.<sup>2</sup> Possibly there were also some Christians at Pompeii before 77, the year of the destruction of the city.<sup>3</sup>

*Illyria, Spain and Gaul*

Earlier still (for he speaks of it in his Epistle to the Romans written in 57 or 58) Paul had, apparently in the course of his travels

<sup>1</sup> Bibliography.—Cf. the various Histories of the Church mentioned in the General Bibliography. But the essential work to consult here is Harnack's *Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten*, 2 vols., 4th edn., Leipzig, 1924. The sources and special works concerning the various regions in which Christian propaganda progressed in early times are indicated in the notes to this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xxviii, 14.

<sup>3</sup> *Graffiti* published in C.I.L., IV, pl. xvi, nos. 3 and 813. The words "audi christianos" at first seems conclusive, but those which follow are still puzzling. Cf. *Bolletino di archeologia cristiana*, 1864, p. 71, where de Rossi sets forth an explanation which is not a necessary one. On the other hand, there have been discovered at Pompeii examples of a kind of word square, called a magic square, the Christian character of which seems fairly certain, though it has not yet won complete acceptance, and their discovery *in situ* is still a matter of discussion. Cf. Jalabert, *A propos des nouveaux exemplaires trouvés à Pompei du carré magique "sator"* (C. R. Acad. Inscr., 1937, pp. 84 et seq.). Cf. also D. Mallarde, *La question dei cristiani a Pompei* (extract from *Rivista di Studi pompeiani*, 1934-1935, Vol. I), which concludes that there are not sufficient proofs of the existence of Christianity in Pompeii.

the preceding year in Macedonia, gone as far as the confines of the Illyrian region,<sup>4</sup> and his disciple Titus visited Dalmatia while the Apostle himself was in Rome.<sup>5</sup> The preaching of Paul doubtless also made itself heard in Spain.<sup>6</sup>

In the course of the stops which his boat must have made,<sup>7</sup> in accordance with the sailing custom of that time, along the Mediterranean coasts of Gaul, Paul's voice very likely sounded in some synagogue or public place of Marseilles or Narbonne. One of his disciples, Crescentius, seems, according to the second epistle to Timothy, to have preached in Gaul,<sup>8</sup> but the towns he may have evangelised are unknown: the church of Vienne claimed him only later, and cannot make good its claim.<sup>9</sup>

As to the apostolic claims of so many other churches of the Gauls, their number and assurance do not suffice to justify them; they are too late in time, and are too manifestly inspired by the sentiments of an ill-informed piety and an intemperate local patriotism to call for a place in a history of the Church.

Some have fancied that Lazarus, the friend of Jesus, came into Provence, that he was the first bishop of Marseilles, and that he was accompanied by his sisters Martha and Mary, whom tradition associates with the town of Tarascon and the caves of Sainte-Baume. Again, the most prominent episcopal sees in France have been generously given as founders direct disciples of St. Peter, such as Trophimus, first bishop at Arles, or disciples of St. Paul, such as Dionysius, the illustrious convert of the Areopagus at Athens, awarded the bishopric of Paris; or again of Jesus Himself, as Martial of Limoges, who is supposed to have been none other than the boy

<sup>4</sup> *Rom.* xv *et seq.*

<sup>5</sup> *II Tim.* iv, 11.

<sup>6</sup> *Cf.* Bk. I, p. 279.

<sup>7</sup> St. Jerome says that Paul made the voyage by sea.

<sup>8</sup> Some good manuscripts have *Κρήσκης εἰς Γαλλίαν* while others give *εἰς Γαλατίαν*. The two words can equally signify Gaul or Galatia in Asia Minor. But the latter seems more likely, from the fact that the same passage mentions together with the mission of Crescentius that of Titus to Dalmatia, i.e., to a country which was evidently still to be evangelized, whereas Galatia had already heard the Gospel. [R. St. J. Parry in his *Pastoral Epistles*, Cambridge, 1920, *in loc.*, says, "There is nothing to decide which district is meant, even if we could be certain that the point of departure was Rome."—Tr.]

<sup>9</sup> That the apostolic travels of Crescentius should have led him to go up the Rhone Valley is itself very plausible. But if the church of Vienne had really had such an early origin, it would not have failed to oppose this to the claims of Arles when there was rivalry for the primacy of jurisdiction in the fifth century.

with the loaves and fishes on the occasion of the Gospel miracle of the multiplication of the loaves! These are naive legends, which edify or amuse, but have their basis only in the imagination and local pride of particular districts.

These stories are for the most part very late: the belief in the coming of SS. Mary and Martha to Provence cannot count a thousand years of existence, and the best proof of its inexactitude is the fact that it was preceded by another, the Burgundian tradition, which placed the bodies of these saints at Vezelay, whither they were supposed to have been brought from the East. There certainly was a bishop of Aix in Provence named Lazarus, but he was a contemporary of St. Augustine. The legend of the apostolic if not Athenian origin of St. Dionysius is somewhat earlier than the provençal legends: we can trace it back to the sixth century,<sup>10</sup> when he begins to be set forth as having been sent by Pope Clement I, the third successor of St. Peter. But what credit can we give to an account so far removed from the actual events?

The oldest apostolic claim in Gaul is that of the church of Arles, which already in the beginning of the fifth century regarded Trophimus its founder as a disciple of St. Peter. But this is unfortunately closely linked with the ambition of Arles at that time to be recognised as the first of the episcopal sees in Gaul, merely because, having become the administrative capital, Pope Zosimus momentarily invested its bishop with the title of Papal Vicar.<sup>11</sup>

The Spanish "traditions" of the evangelisation of the country by St. James the Great have as little foundation and are almost more unlikely than the apostolic legends of Gaul, seeing that St. James was martyred at Jerusalem before the dispersion of the apostles.<sup>12</sup>

Putting legends aside, it remains that some privileged regions of

<sup>10</sup> Cf. L. Levillain, *Etude sur l'Abbaye de Saint-Denis à l'époque mérovingienne*, 1. *Les sources narratives*, in *Bibliothèque de l'Ecole de Chartes*, Vol. LXXXII, 1921, p. 528, and *Le crise des années 507-508 et les rivalités d'influence en Gaule* (*Mélanges Jorga*, Paris, 1933, pp. 537-567).

<sup>11</sup> On the apostolic legends in general concerning the churches in Gaul, see J. Zeiller, *Les origines chrétiennes en Gaule*, in *Revue d'Histoire de l'Eglise de France*, 1926, pp. 16-33, which contains a bibliography on the subject. The only monograph of the present day on Christian origins in Gaul is that of T. Scott Holmes, *The Origin and Development of the Christian Church in Gaul during the First Six Centuries of the Christian Era*, London, 1911.

<sup>12</sup> On Christian origins in Spain, cf. Z. Garcia Villada, *Historia ecclesiastica de Espana*, Vol. I, *El cristianismo durante la dominacion romana*, Madrid, 1929, 2 vols.



the West, Rome and southern Italy, the Illyrian littoral and also, apparently, the coasts of Provence and Spain, received the first announcement of the Gospel in the apostolic period. We may conjecture that the same was the case with Africa, since there were inhabitants of Cyrene amongst those who heard the sermon at Pentecost, and a great metropolis like Carthage was in constant relation with the East.<sup>13</sup> The relatively numerous Oriental elements in several Western cities, especially in seaports such as Puteoli, Marseilles, and Carthage, must have provided at the beginning very active agents of Christian propaganda.

### *Christianity in Asia*

But in this second half of the first century, the East from which they came was much more thoroughly penetrated by the Christian Faith than was the West. Palestine was its original focus, and Syria, through its metropolis Antioch, was the second centre from which it spread. Asia Minor, in which so many cities had received the word from St. Paul, and perhaps from St. John, was by the end of the first century one of the parts of the Empire in which the religion of Christ had been most widely preached. The Church of Ephesus owed its foundation to St. Paul, and the apostle John, according to the generally received tradition, governed it subsequently for many years.<sup>14</sup> The churches of Alexandria, Troas, Laodicea and Hierapolis, the dwelling place of Philip the deacon (later confused with the apostle of the same name) and his daughters known as prophetesses, are mentioned in the Pauline epistles. The Churches of Smyrna, Pergamus, Sardis, Philadelphia and Thyatira were, together with those of Ephesus and Laodicea, the recipients of the *Apocalypse* of John. The Christian communities of Tralles in Lydia and Magnesia in Caria appear about the year 100 in the letters of St. Ignatius of Antioch, the successor of Evodius, left in that city by St. Peter when his own apostolate called him elsewhere.

<sup>13</sup> A vague memory was conserved in the church of Carthage that its first preachers of Christianity originally came from the East. The idea that it had received Christianity from Rome seems to have originated only later on. Cf. P. Monceaux, *Histoire littéraire de l'Afrique chrétienne*, Vol. I, Paris, 1901, ch. 1, pp. 3-11, and A. Audollent, *Carthage romaine*, Paris, 1901, L. V, part I, ch. I, pp. 435-441.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Bk. I, pp. 238, 310.

Further away from the coastal region of Asia Minor, Christianity penetrated into Pisidia with St. Paul. Iconium, Antioch in Pisidia, Lystra and Derbe possessed very early their Christian communities, and the rest of the country became Christianised rapidly. The Christian churches in Galatia were also among the fruits of the apostolate of St. Paul, who addressed to them one of his best known letters. He wrote also to the Christians of Colossæ in Phrygia, though he seems not to have evangelised them.

Bithynia on the Black Sea was evidently reached before the end of the first century, since already in the dawn of the second Christianity was, according to the letters of Pliny the Younger, invading "not only the cities but also the towns and the countryside, emptying the precincts of the temples."<sup>15</sup>

Shortly afterwards, the town of Sinope had a bishop, who was the father of the heretic Marcion.<sup>16</sup>

Christianity also spread into the islands of the Archipelago. Paul and Barnabas had preached in 44 or 45 at Cyprus, and Paul there brought about the striking conversion of the proconsul, Sergius Paulus.

### *Christianity in the Hellenic Peninsula*

The various countries in the hellenic peninsula, Macedonia, Greece, and at least some of the neighbouring islands, had been evangelised at the very beginning of Christian preaching by St. Paul himself or his disciples such as Titus, who was the apostle of Crete. At any rate, the epistle which Paul addressed to Titus tells us that the apostle had placed him at the head of the Christian community constituted in the island, in which he had perhaps himself preached after his imprisonment in Rome and his voyage to Spain.

Philippi in Macedonia, Thessalonica, Berea, Nicopolis in Epirus, Athens, Corinth and Cenchræ near Corinth, had their churches towards the latter part of the first century. Those of Develtum and Anchialo in Thrace, Larissa in Thessaly, Lacedæmon and Cephalonia are mentioned in the second century. The church of Byzantium, which was to have so striking a future, cannot bring forward any proof of its existence at this time other than that of

<sup>15</sup> Cf. *infra*, p. 386.

<sup>16</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.*, V, 13, 3.

having produced the heretic Theodotus, who went to Rome about 190.<sup>17</sup>

True, later on its claimants to pre-eminence in the East were able to appeal to the "tradition" of a Thracian apostolate of St. Andrew, whose Acts make him die a martyr in Achaia. But these Acts are not earlier than the end of the third century, and are clearly legendary in some respects.<sup>18</sup> They may indeed convey to us an echo of memories which are earlier and less unworthy of belief, and the fact that Eusebius, relying perhaps on Origen, mentions the tradition<sup>19</sup> of a mission of Andrew in Scythia (that is, apparently, on the Roman shores of the Black Sea south of the Danube, inhabited by ancient Greek colonies) would support the hypothesis that Andrew was in touch with the Hellenic world, whose patron saint he became. But this remains wholly conjectural.

### *Christianity in Egypt*

To the south-east of Palestine there is Egypt, destined to play a prominent part in the history of early Christendom. Did this country receive the Christian seed in apostolic times? That is, in itself, quite likely. A passage in the *Acts* (xviii, 24-25) perhaps confirms it when it speaks of the Alexandrian Jew, Apollos, "who had been instructed (in his own country) in the way of the Lord"; unfortunately the parenthesis is not found in all the manuscripts. In any case it must be admitted that nothing is known of this primitive evangelisation. A tradition which came to be accepted, and is found in Eusebius,<sup>20</sup> attributes the foundation of the great ecclesiastical see of Egypt, that of Alexandria, to St. Mark the evangelist, the disciple of St. Peter, and we have a list of bishops which begins with him. We are not in a position to estimate the value of the first names on this list, but equally we must not dismiss them entirely.<sup>21</sup> If the letter of Claudius to the Alexandrians,

<sup>17</sup> Hippolytus, *Philosophumena*, VII, 35.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. J. Flämion, *Les Actes apocryphes de l'apôtre André*, Louvain-Paris, 1911. The *Acts of Andrew* have been published by Lipsius and Bonnet in *Acta Apostolorum apocrypha*, Vol. II, Leipzig, 1898, Vol. I. English translation in James, *Apocryphal New Testament*, pp. 337-363.

<sup>19</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.*, III, i, 1. The text is given in the works of Origen, Migne, P.G., Vol. XII, 92, but it does not follow clearly from the text of Eusebius that the statement about Andrew was already in Origen.

<sup>20</sup> *Hist. Eccles.*, II, 16, 1.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.*, II, 24; III, 14; IV, 19.

which has aroused such interest and controversy, could be accepted as a witness to the reality of Christian activity at Alexandria in the year 41, this would decidedly strengthen the information given in Eusebius for this very same year. But the testimony seems ever less satisfactory,<sup>22</sup> and we must resign ourselves to an ignorance as to the origin of the Egyptian church which does not lessen the probability of its very great antiquity. Already in the second century the bishops of Alexandria appear in history,<sup>23</sup> and this great city had then a large Christian population, which implies a much earlier evangelisation.

*Progress of the Evangelisation of the West in the Second Century.  
Gaul*

In the course of this century, Christianity made good progress in the West, which hitherto had not been much affected. The churches of Gaul and Africa, in fact, figure gloriously in history well before the year 200.

The well known story of the martyrdom of Christians at Lyons in 177 shows us a church which was already of some importance in the Gallic metropolis in the reign of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius.<sup>24</sup> At its head was Bishop Pothinus, who came originally from Asia, where he had been a disciple of St. Polycarp of Smyrna; in Lyons he was assisted by clerics of various ranks.

We find also amongst the martyrs of Lyons a deacon of Vienne, which accordingly reveals the existence of a Christian community in that city. All this implies an evangelisation which had taken place some time before, and probably we shall not go far wrong if we think that the beginnings of Christianity at Lyons were not later than the reign of Hadrian, in the first half of the second century. An inscription, preserved at Marseilles,<sup>25</sup> and coming doubtless from that neighbourhood, which seems to refer to two martyrs Volusianus and Fortunatus, burnt to death, may well be at least as ancient.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Bk. I, p. 296, n. 10.

<sup>23</sup> At least beginning with Demetrius (180). The earlier names, again, are not summarily to be rejected, but the constant ascription of exactly twelve years of episcopate by the list in Eusebius to each one of the predecessors of Demetrius after Annianus, the successor of Mark, barely conceals a chronological ignorance which must be taken into consideration.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. *infra*, p. 399.

<sup>25</sup> *Corpus inscriptionum Latinorum*, Vol. XII, 489.

## Africa

The martyrological documents of Africa are concerned with events very close in time to those of Lyons, and lead to a similar conclusion. African Christianity, which gave to the church several martyrs towards the end of the second century, certainly began many years earlier. An archaeological testimony confirms this in a very remarkable way: at Susa, the ancient Hadrumetum, Christian catacombs have been found in one of which there is an inscription of the Severian epoch, belonging to a tomb which is chronologically one of the last of a series numbering more than five thousand. The catacomb therefore must have come into use at least half a century previously, which would put the first evangelisation in the first half of the second century.<sup>26</sup> It is likely that Christian preaching reached Carthage before secondary towns like Hadrumetum.

## Spain

May we think that Christianity developed in a similar way in Spain in the second century? Here there are no traces perpetuated in stone such as can be appealed to by the churches of Gaul and Africa.<sup>27</sup> The darkness which envelopes the Christian origins in Spain after the preaching of St. Paul, the immediate consequences of which escape us entirely, is at most interrupted by one glimmer of light.

An entry in the Martyrology of Adon<sup>28</sup> states that a mission consisting of seven bishops was sent into Spain by St. Peter: the absence of this information in the Hieronymian Martyrology is not calculated to add to its credibility; the number seven and the sending by St. Peter increase our mistrust. Yet there is one point which inclines us to a more favourable judgment: the head of the mission is said to have founded the church of the *Civitas Accitana* (Guadix). Now when about the year 300 there was held at Illiberi (Elvira) a council famous in the religious annals of Spain, the Bishop of Acci presided over it: it is allowable to infer from this

<sup>26</sup> Mgr. Leynaud, *Les catacombes africaines. Sousse-Hadrumète*, 2nd edn., Algiers, 1922, pp. 9-16. The inscription in question is dated in the consulate of Lupus, who may be L. Virius Lupus, consul in 232.

<sup>27</sup> A Tarragonian inscription (C.I.L., II, p. 25,\* no. 231 \*) alluding to the penetration of Christianity in this province under Nero is obviously a forgery.

<sup>28</sup> Under date May 15th.

that the church of Acci was regarded then as the mother church of Spain, or at least of the province of Tarragona. But the inference is not a peremptory one.

In any case, the date of the mission which gave birth to the church of Acci and to those of the surrounding region is impossible to determine even approximately.

## § 2. EVANGELISATION BEYOND THE EMPIRE

### *Christianity in Persia*

There are good grounds for believing in a very early preaching of Christianity outside the Empire, in the great kingdom which extended beyond the eastern frontiers of the Roman world, the Parthian kingdom, which at the beginning of the third century became once more the Persian realm. The "traditions" of a three-fold apostolate of Bartholomew, Thaddæus and Thomas in Persia are without solid foundation.<sup>1</sup> But the text in the Acts of the Apostles (ii, 9) which mentions among those present on Pentecost Day "Parthians and Medes, and Elamites, and inhabitants of Mesopotamia" supports the view that "towards the year 80, the churches of the greco-roman world knew of the existence of Christian communities in the far away lands of the East."<sup>2</sup>

It is likely that the missionary activity of these first propagators of Christianity in Persia was confined to the Jewish colonies of Babylonia. But it would seem that it met with little success, seeing that it left no trace, and on the contrary a passage in the Talmud speaks of the Babylonian region as at that time entirely outside Christian influence.<sup>3</sup>

Was Christian preaching rejected by the synagogues, and addressed instead, as elsewhere, to the pagans? This is possible, if it be true that, as the documents which give us some knowledge, though imperfect, of Mandæism (a transformation of the old Iranian religion combined with semitic elements) state, relations were established between the Mandæans and the Christians of early times. But in reality, what we know of Mandæism—in spite of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Bk. I, pp. 323-4, and J. Labourt, *Le christianisme dans l'Empire perse sous la dynastie sassanide*, Paris, 1904, pp. 11-15.

<sup>2</sup> Labourt, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

recent attempts which have gone so far as to endeavour to find in it one of the religious currents from whence Christianity itself arose<sup>4</sup>—remains too uncertain to enable us to specify, or even to establish a relation between Christianity and the oriental movement of religious syncretism of which the Babylonian Gnosticism shown in Mandæism constituted a phase.

In short, what had been and was again to become the Persian kingdom was touched by Christian propaganda already in apostolic times; but the results, such as they were, are so little apparent to us that we may well wonder whether the seed sown by these first evangelists was not almost completely choked. In any case we cannot number Persia amongst the countries in which we find at the end of the first, or even in the first half of the second century, a properly constituted Church.

### *Christianity in Osroene*

Between the Roman Empire and the Parthian kingdom, which became Persia once more later, there existed until the third century a little independent state, that of Edessa or Osroene, in which Christianity was planted quite early. The tradition recorded by Eusebius which puts King Abgar in correspondence with Jesus Himself, and says that his country was evangelized by the apostle Thomas and the disciple Thaddeus (Addai), has all the appearances of a legend; the fourth century veneration of the tomb of St. Thomas at Edessa and the reading there of supposed letters from Jesus to Abgar certainly do not suffice to make it authentic.<sup>5</sup> It is not even certain that the legend of Thaddeus may not be merely an embellishment of the acts and deeds of an historic personage

<sup>4</sup> Cf. R. Reitzenstein, *Das mandäische Buch des Herrn des Grosse und die Evangelienüberlieferung*, Heidelberg, 1919. Critique by M. J. Lagrange, *La gnose mandéenne et la tradition évangélique*, in *Revue biblique*, 1927, pp. 321-349 and 481-515, and 1928, pp. 5-32. A. Loisy, *Le mandéisme et les origines chrétiennes* (Paris, 1934) also declines to accept the thesis of Reitzenstein. H. Lietzmann, *Ein Beitrag zur Mandäerfrage* (*Sitzungsberichte Akad. Berlin, phil.-hist. Klasse*, 1930, pp. 596-608) has set forth the reasons for thinking that the Mandæans were an oriental Gnostic sect, of a relatively late date, and that it had nothing to do with Christian origins. [A useful summary of recent Mandæan studies is given in F. C. Burkitt's *Church and Gnosis*, Cambridge, 1932.]

<sup>5</sup> Cf. J. Tixeront, *Les origines de l'Eglise d'Edesse*, Paris, 1888. The text of Abgar's letter and our Lord's reply is given in translation in M. R. James, *Apocryphal New Testament*, pp. 476-77.

named Addai. Doubtless we may think that Eusebius, who was fairly well informed as to the local traditions of the countries near Syria, would not trouble to include a recently formed legend concerning the planting of Christianity in Osroene. But how are we to explain the fact that the apostle of Edessa, who is supposed to have died a martyr, is not even mentioned in the Syrian martyrology of the year 412? It is best to admit that the circumstances of the evangelisation of Osroene escape us. But the great number of the Christians in the region of Edessa at the end of the second century compels us to allow that its evangelization had begun long before.

From Edessa, the Gospel must have been very soon carried beyond the Tigris, into Adiabene, if we may believe the Chronicle of the Church of Arbela<sup>6</sup> which attributes this apostolate across the Tigris to the supposed founder of the church of Edessa. But the re-appearance at the commencement of the church of Adiabene of this doubtful founder of that of Edessa, together with more than one anachronism and contradiction in various martyrological testimonies, are not calculated to win<sup>7</sup> for the Chronicle of Arbella a credit which critics such as Harnack<sup>8</sup> have nevertheless not refused to give it.

As to an apostolic preaching of the Gospel on the African or Arabian shores of the Red Sea and as far as the Indies, we have already remarked that its historic reality remains uncertain, and that in any case its immediate results, if there were any, are entirely hidden from us.

<sup>6</sup> Edited by P. Zorell, *Orientalia christiana*, VIII, 4, no. 31 (1927).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Paul Peeters, *La Passionnaire d'Adiabène* in *Analecta Bollandiana*, Vol. XLIII, 1925, pp. 261-325.

<sup>8</sup> In his last edition (4th) of *Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums*, Leipzig, 1924.



# THE FIRST PERSECUTIONS, AND IMPERIAL LEGISLATION CONCERNING THE CHRISTIANS<sup>1</sup>

## § I. THE NERONIAN PERSECUTION

WHILE the expansion of Christianity was taking place in the Roman world and beyond, the Empire, well before the end of the second century, had declared war upon the Church, beginning by putting its first head to death.

### *The Martyrdom of St. Peter*

The martyrdom of St. Peter is, with that of St. Paul, the most important event in the first bloody persecution ordered by the imperial authority, which struck at Christians in the Empire and began in the reign of Nero.

### *The Burning of Rome and the Accusing of the Christians*

This persecution, which might have burst forth some day or other on other excuses, since an occasion would probably have been sought sooner or later to proscribe Christianity, had an accidental immediate cause. In July, 64, a terrible fire devastated several parts of Rome; an almost unanimous and possibly well-informed opinion regarded Nero as having caused the fire, or at any rate of having helped its spread, in the desire to clear a place for the extension of his palace. To turn aside the current of hostile opinion, the emperor conceived the idea of putting the blame on the

<sup>1</sup> Bibliography.—The general bibliography for this chapter is the same as that of the preceding one.

Particular works to be referred to for the study of the character of the persecutions are, together with the ancient sources which give information on this subject, indicated in the notes to the chapter.

To the above may be added: A. Bouché-Leclercq, *L'intolérance religieuse et la politique*, Paris, 1911; A. Manaresi, *L'impero romano e il cristianesimo*, Turin, 1914; L. Homo, *Les empereurs romains et le christianisme*, Paris, 1931.

Christians, now named as such for the first time by Tacitus<sup>2</sup> and described as men "hated for their infamies" and "convicted of hatred of the human race."<sup>3</sup> Whether because of the hatred which they inspired, or more probably because of that of which they were thought to be guilty because they had not the spirit of the world, the hostility of public opinion towards them is beyond doubt. Was this spontaneous? Probably it was, in great measure: the mass of the people, perhaps because they still confused Christians with the Jews, who were always and everywhere disliked for their sectarianism, was certainly not favourable. They came to impute to them the crimes of atheism, magic, cannibalism, and other abominations. Nevertheless there may have been other factors in 64.

In the Emperor's entourage, the influence of the Judaism which was loyal to the Empire and which would play a prominent part a little later under the Flavian dynasty, was already fairly strong: the Judaising sympathies of the favourite Poppea are known.<sup>4</sup> And the hatred of the followers of the Old Law for those of the New did not diminish. Did protégés of Poppea admitted into the circle immediately surrounding the emperor, think that they would serve Nero as well as themselves "by pointing out as the authors of the crime the Christians"<sup>5</sup> who took pleasure, it was said—and the sentiments of which the *Apocalypse* of St. John is a vehement though late echo, might seem to give an appearance of justification to such sayings—"in the ideas of heavenly vengeance, a universal conflagration, and the destruction of the world"?<sup>6</sup> The conjecture is a plausible one; positive arguments to support it are lacking. Nevertheless, a passage in the celebrated letter addressed to the Corinthians by St. Clement, one of the first successors of St. Peter, saying that SS. Peter and Paul perished as victims of jealousy,<sup>7</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *Annales*, XV, 44.

<sup>3</sup> The manuscript of Tacitus long regarded as the best, the *Mediceus*, has instead of the word *convicti*, that of *conjuncti*, which would mean that the Christians were involved in one and the same persecution both for having caused the fire, and because of their *odium generis humani*. Cf. E. Coq, *De la nature des crimes imputés aux chrétiens d'après Tacite*, in *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire* published by the *Ecole française* in Rome, Vol. VI, 1886, pp. 115-139. The general nature of events is more or less the same in either interpretation.

<sup>4</sup> Josephus, *Life*, 3; *Antiquities of the Jews*, XVIII-XX. Cf. Tacitus, *Hist.*, i, 22.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. E. Renan, *L'Antichrist*, pp. 159-161.

<sup>6</sup> Duruy, *Histoire des Romains*, Vol. IV, p. 507 (edn. 1882, Paris).

<sup>7</sup> *First Epistle to Corinthians*, V.

may be a reference to this hostile intervention of the Jewish element. In any case, from that day the Christians began to be distinguished by the Roman authorities from the Jews, who remained in possession of their privileges, while Christians were arrested, judged and condemned.

Possibly internal discords played some part in the denunciations which sent some of the Christian community of Rome to their deaths, together with their leaders: the letter of St. Clement is equally capable of being interpreted in this sense. One may infer that the disagreements, due very likely to the action of Judeo-Christians, led to imprudences which helped to cause the intervention of the Roman police, if they did not go as far as positive acts of denunciation—a hypothesis which may be supported by a phrase in Tacitus concerning indications given to the authorities by some Christians—*indicio eorum*.<sup>8</sup>

### *The Martyrs*

First were arrested, according to Tacitus,<sup>9</sup> those who admitted (*fatebantur*) perhaps the crime of arson<sup>10</sup>—the untrue confession may have been extorted by torture—or more probably their Christianity, which from this moment became a crime. Then, *indicio eorum* (this may just as well mean formal denunciations obtained from these first prisoners, or else simple indications drawn from their talk, their very silences, their relations, and from all that was known of their life), the arrests increased rapidly, and a great number of Christians—*multitudo ingens*, writes Tacitus, who would not wish to exaggerate greatly the number of those he regarded as enemies of Roman society,<sup>11</sup> were eventually given over to the torments which Nero's cruelty had invented for them. He

<sup>8</sup> Cf. O. Cullmann, *Les causes de la mort de Pierre et de Paul d'après le témoignage de Clément Romain*, in *Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuse*, 1930, pp. 294-300.

<sup>9</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>10</sup> The hypothesis of the guilt of the Christians has found a few defenders in our days: cf. Pascal, *L'incendio di Roma e i primi cristiani*, 2nd edn., Turin, 1901; it has no support in early writers: not one of those who have spoken of the burning of Rome after Tacitus imputes it to the Christians. Cf. A. Profumo, *Le fonti ed i tempi dell' incendio neroniano*, Rome, 1905.

<sup>11</sup> The Hieronymian Martyrology gives 979 as the number of martyrs who perished with SS. Peter and Paul. It is difficult to estimate the value of this figure, but it is worth mentioning.

conceived the idea of "transforming their torture into a spectacle, and in his gardens on the Vatican he gave nightly festivals, in which the unfortunate Christians, covered in pitch and devoured by the flames, cast a sinister light on the circus performances." <sup>12</sup>

Peter was one of the martyrs. <sup>13</sup>

Eusebius, in his *Ecclesiastical History*, <sup>14</sup> gives the date 67 or 68, instead of 64 or 65 for this, probably merely because he attributes to Peter the famous twenty-five years as Bishop of Rome, beginning in 42. But the persecution once begun may have continued after 64, and it is not at all impossible that Paul, arrested after his return to Rome, may have suffered the capital penalty <sup>15</sup> just one or two years after St. Peter. But the same immemorial cult which unites them together attests the at least relative chronological proximity of their death.

## § 2. THE PROHIBITION OF CHRISTIANITY

### *Possible Extension of the Persecution to the Provinces*

Did the persecution extend to the provinces? We do not possess any positive statement to this effect, but there may be an allusion to it in the Epistle to the Hebrews, <sup>1</sup> and it may also be urged that after the measures ordered by Nero the profession of Christianity was prohibited in the Empire. But the reality of this prohibition by Nero, or of an *institutum neronianum* expressly forbidding the Christian religion, has not met with universal acceptance. In point

<sup>12</sup> L. Duchesne, *Histoire de l'Eglise*, Vol. I, p. 63.

<sup>13</sup> According to a tradition of which Tertullian, *De Præscriptione* 36, *Scorpiacus* 15, is our first witness, he was condemned to be crucified. This is quite in harmony with the account of Tacitus, which speaks of Christians as crucified in the Vatican gardens, and it may also be alluded to by St. John's Gospel (xxi, 18, 19): "When thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and lead thee whither thou wouldst not. And this he said, signifying by what death he should glorify God."

<sup>14</sup> Eusebius, *Eccles. Hist.*, II, XIV, 6, where he makes Peter arrive in Rome in the year 42, and attributes to him a Roman episcopate of 25 years.

<sup>15</sup> Clement, the successor of Peter (*Epistle to the Corinthians*), Tertullian, and the priest Caius agree in saying that St. Paul was beheaded on the Ostian Way, and buried there.

<sup>1</sup> In x, 32-38 there is a reference to tribulations endured by believers for their faith. But it is not certain that this can be understood of the persecution under Domitian, inasmuch as the Epistle to the Hebrews written in the name of St. Paul was somewhat later in appearance.

of fact, it is known only indirectly,<sup>2</sup> but its existence can scarcely be questioned.

### *The Neronian Legislation against Christianity*

The questions put about half a century later by Pliny the Younger, Governor of Bithynia, to the Emperor Trajan as to the attitude to be adopted towards the Christians of his province, and the imperial rescript<sup>3</sup> which sent him the instructions asked for, prove the existence of an earlier legislation, the application of which had only to be clarified. Tertullian asserts, moreover,<sup>4</sup> in the most formal manner that Nero was the first to promulgate a law against Christians, and it cannot be doubted that the proscription of Christianity as such dates back to him: the Christians, first of all persecuted as incendiaries through the dishonest expedient of the frightened Nero, were evidently subsequently outlawed after police enquiries which ascertained their religious profession.<sup>5</sup>

Until then they had continued to be confused with the Jews in the eyes of the Roman authority; they were regarded doubtless as a particular sect, and thus enjoyed the privileges which enabled the Jews to retain their national religion in the Empire without performing acts of obedience in respect of the official cults. But henceforth a discrimination was made; possibly the Jews themselves were partly responsible for this, and this may be the most exact element in the thesis which regards the Jewish element as in some measure the cause of the outbreak of the first persecution. Henceforth Christianity was no longer regarded as a dissident form of Judaism, and had no longer any right to the favours enjoyed by the latter.<sup>6</sup> Consequently, the Christians were now bound, as

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the full bibliography of the question in Cabrol-Leclercq, *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne*, article *Loi persecutrice*.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *infra*, pp. 378-9.

<sup>4</sup> *Ad nationes* 7; *Apologeticus*, 5.

<sup>5</sup> The Neronian origin of the prohibition of Christianity is indirectly confirmed by the text of *I Peter* iv, 16, which opposes the glory of suffering *ut christianus* to the opprobrium involved in a condemnation for a crime against common law. The Epistle reflects the events in the primitive community.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. above, Bk. I, pp. 33-34, 68 *et seq.*; also G. Costa, *Religione e politica nell'impero romano*, Turin, 1923, pp. 97-108. According to him, Jews and Christians were still confused together for a much longer time. He suggests that the text in Tacitus concerning the first persecution was modified, and that the *ingens multitudo* referred to included also a great number of Jews. But he brings forward no proof. Still, it is feasible that Christianity was not from this very moment

citizens of the Empire, to comply with the minimum of religious conformity called for by the idea of the ancient State<sup>7</sup> or else disappear. Their faith, which allowed no concession, internal or external, to polytheism, excluded such conformity, and so there remained only outlawry, and this is undoubtedly the basis of the legislation made in their regard by Nero, and which may be summed up in one short phrase: *non licet esse christianos*, it is not lawful for Christians to exist.

### § 3. JURIDICAL CHARACTER OF THE PERSECUTIONS

*The persecutions were not the effect merely of the application of laws previously existing.*

The existence of a special legislative act explicitly prohibiting Christianity has nevertheless been much discussed. It has been said that it was sufficient to apply to Christians existing laws specifying penalties for the crime of sacrilege or of *lèse majesté*, as this would involve them in punishments.<sup>1</sup> But sacrilege properly so called supposes a positive criminal act, which could not be found in the case of Christians; as for the crime of *lèse majesté*, closely connected, in point of fact, with that of sacrilege, committed in refusing to take part in the cult of the Emperor's divinity, we do not see Christians explicitly accused of this in the first two centuries: it is only in the third that the magistrates tried regularly to force Christians to sacrifice to the divinity of the emperor in consequence of new edicts of persecution, and condemned them if they refused to do so.

Doubtless one may say that the crime existed implicitly from the

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regarded as a religion absolutely distinct from Judaism, but rather as a dissident form of it. The Emperor Domitian who, as we shall see, had a certain number of Christians put to death, was equally hostile to the Jews, as may be seen from the development of the *fiscus judaicus* in his reign. Cf. S. Gsell, *Essai sur le règne de l'empereur Domitien*, Paris, 1893, pp. 287-316. The enquiry which he caused to be made (cf. *infra*, p. 387) as to the descendants of the family of Jesus seems to show that he busied himself politically about Christianity regarded at least up to a certain point as a branch of Judaism.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Fustel de Coulanges, *La cité antique*.

<sup>1</sup> Thesis of K. J. Neumann, *Der römische Staat und die allgemeine Kirche bis auf Diocletian*, Leipzig, 1890, pp. 12 et seq.

beginning, inasmuch as Christians did not recognise the Emperor as a god, and hence adopted an attitude which was bound to lead to their being regarded as defective citizens or subjects. But before the third century no text proves that the proper motive of the persecution of the Christians was a refusal which made them guilty of *lèse majesté*. They were accused rather, at first, of failing to reverence the gods of the Empire in general, and even this did not make them officially atheists, as they were judged to be by popular ignorance.

The same is true of the accusation of other especially serious crimes against common law, such as magic, incest, or infanticide: it was never more than popular rumour which imputed these to the Christians, and official justice did not take up these accusations.<sup>2</sup> Hence we shall not find in previous penal law the precise juridical basis of the persecutions.

*Nor were they due merely to the coercive power of the magistrates.*

Others have sought for this basis in the power of *coercitio*,<sup>3</sup> i.e., police powers which belonged to all the Roman magistrates. In order to maintain public order, these had a very extensive authority which went as far as putting to death anyone who disturbed the peace. Hence it is suggested that it was as public disturbers that the Christians, disobeying the injunction to abandon a profession of faith which was in itself a public disorder, were condemned by the decision of the magistrates, without any need of applying to them a more express law.

But if the magistrates merely had to exercise towards the Christians their power of *coercitio*, why did they more than once think it necessary to consult the prince as to the way to treat them, as we see Pliny the Younger writing to Trajan, and other governors under Antoninus or Marcus Aurelius? Moreover, Pliny speaks formally of the steps taken against the Christians as resulting from the exercise of criminal jurisdiction, *cognitio*, and accordingly, not as a result of *coercitio*. Lastly, the *coercitio* extending to the capital penalty could not be exercised in the case of a Roman citizen.

<sup>2</sup> Contrary to what is maintained by E. Le Blant, *Sur les bases des poursuites dirigées contre les chrétiens*, in *Comptes-rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et de Belles-Lettres*, 1866, pp. 358 et seq., according to whom Christians were condemned as guilty of homicide or of magic, as well as of sacrilege or *lèse majesté*.

<sup>3</sup> Theory of T. Mommsen, *Der Religionsfrevel nach römischen Recht*, in *Historische Zeitschrift, Neue Folge*, XXVIII, 1890, pp. 389-429.

### *Special Legislation against the Christians*

Thus we are compelled to accept <sup>4</sup> the reality of special legislative measures against the Christians, of which the Emperor Nero was the author, as in fact affirmed by Tertullian.<sup>5</sup> From his reign to that of Septimius Severus, who introduced a new regime, the juridical situation of Christians in the Roman Empire remained the same: they were proscribed, not as guilty of crimes against the common law such as incest, cannibalism or magic, as imputed to them so often by popular hostility, itself caused by difference of beliefs and customs, nor of the crimes of sacrilege or *lèse majesté*, but as guilty of professing a religion which had been forbidden: *christianos esse non licet*. Thus it is the very name of Christian, the *nomen christianum*, that was forbidden and condemned, as Christian apologists more than once contended.

### *The Clarifications in Trajan's Rescript*

The rescript of Trajan added to the principle of Nero about half a century later some necessary clarifications, the need of which had been shown in practice.<sup>6</sup> This imperial reply to the questions from a governor consisted of three points. The first two were modifications of a rule which the progress of a propaganda that could in no wise be stopped made it difficult to apply in all strictness, as is

<sup>4</sup> As C. Callewaert well brought out over thirty years ago, in a series of works: *Les premiers chrétiens fuerint-ils persécutés par édits généraux ou par mesures de police?* in *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique*, 1910, pp. 771-797; 1902, pp. 5-15, 324-348, 607-615; *Le délit de christianisme dans les deux premiers siècles*, in *Revue des questions historiques*, 1903, Vol. LXXIV, pp. 28-55; *Les premiers chrétiens et l'accusation de lèse-majesté*, in *ibid.*, 1904, Vol. LXXXVI, pp. 5-28; *Les persécutions contre les chrétiens dans la politique religieuse de l'Empire romain*, in *ibid.*, 1907, Vol. LXXXII, pp. 5-19; *La méthode dans la recherche de la base juridique des premières persécutions*, in *Revue d'histoire ecclés.*, 1911, pp. 5-16, 633-651.

<sup>5</sup> "Institutum Neronianum" is how he describes the law of persecution in *Apolog.*, 5.

<sup>6</sup> Pliny the Younger, *Epistolæ* X, 97 and 98. Doubts have sometimes been raised as to the authenticity of this correspondence, especially in view of the improbability of the picture which Pliny gives of his province, as already so strongly affected by Christian propaganda that the temples were deserted, and the sacrifices abandoned. We may reply with E. Babut, *Remarques sur les deux lettres de Pline et de Trajan relatives aux chrétiens de Bithynie*, in *Revue d'histoire et de Littérature religieuses*, new series Vol. I, 1910, pp. 289-305, that Pliny, who manifestly desired not to pronounce too many condemnations, may have been led to magnify the number of Christians in order to discourage repression by the very perspective of its extent.



shown well by Pliny's hesitation before the prospect of too numerous condemnations.

The Emperor accordingly declared in substance: 1. Governmental authority is not to take the initiative in the processes: it is not to seek out Christians, *christiani conquirendi non sunt*. 2. Those who are accused and who declare that they are not Christians, or are such no longer, that is to say, those who have committed the legal crime of being Christians but have effaced it by apostasy, manifested by an external act of adhesion to paganism, are to be dismissed. 3. Those who confess to being Christians are to be condemned.

The letter of Pliny, and the sequence of events, show that this condemnation could only be the capital penalty, i.e., death, or one of the penalties which, like exile or forced labour in the mines involved civil death. But on the other hand, and in virtue of the second point in the rescript, we shall no more see governors before whom Christians are taken doing their utmost to obtain from them a word, or sometimes just a simple act, such as offering a few grains of incense to the statue of the Emperor, which could be interpreted as a disavowal, even if only a temporary one, of the Christian faith.

Tortures were in many instances less a punishment than a means attempted in order to extract this denial from the accused. As for the Emperors themselves, the best of them, as we shall see in detail in the case of Hadrian and Antoninus, if not Marcus Aurelius, who regarded Christians with contempt rather than pity, added new precautions which mitigated the application of a legal system the principle of which they were nevertheless careful to maintain in all its strictness.

### *Main Idea of the Legislation against the Christians*

What, then, was the underlying idea which alone explains the transformation of an expedient of the frightened Nero into a rule of the State? It was that Christianity, a strictly monotheistic religion, whose God would not divide his honour with other divinities or with the world, could not be reconciled with the fundamental conceptions upon which the Roman State rested. For this was closely associated with a number of religious traditions, if not also of habits of life, which were incompatible with the new faith; the

mere fact that the Christians did not worship the gods of Rome made them rebels, or at least suspect, even before the time when the worship or refusal of worship of the Emperor's statue became the touchstone of their Roman conformity.

The religious position of the Jews was similar; but they had before the year 70 formed a national body which had received privileges and retained them after their final dispersion. Even when the obligation to sacrifice to the Emperor could be imposed upon every citizen, they obtained legal dispensations which safeguarded them from persecution.<sup>7</sup> Doubtless the Roman authority only gradually learnt to make a distinction between Christians and Jews. But the day came when all confusion ceased. Christians did not, like the Jews, form a compact national body, but a religious society scattered abroad from its origin, the members of which were all equally subjects who could not claim any special favour. This explains the imperial legislation against Christianity.

### *Juridical Origin and Form of this Legislation*

The juridical origin was probably an ancient law of the republican epoch which forbade *superstitio illicita*,<sup>8</sup> and its form an imperial edict. Like the edicts of the prætors of the Republic, this particular edict was theoretically in force only during the reign of the Emperor who had published it. Thus it had to be renewed, and adopted, so to speak, by his successor.

This gives us, perhaps, a first reason for the intermittent character the persecutions at first displayed. Trajan decided at the beginning of the second century that there were to be no measures against Christians without previous accusation. But in the first place, these measures had to be in conformity with the imperial will. This was expressed for the first time by Nero. But then there was no severity towards Christians under the two first Flavians. The anti-Christian laws were renewed, in circumstances which we shall explain later, under Domitian; and this commencement of persecuting legislation by the two first century rulers who had left the worst reputations enabled the Christian apologists of the second

<sup>7</sup> Instead of offering a sacrifice to the divine emperor, they offered one to God for the emperor (cf. Josephus, *Contra Apionem*, II, 6, 77). See an account of the various privileges of the Jews in the matter of the imperial cult, in J. Juster, *Les Juifs dans l'Empire romain*, Paris, 1914, Vol. I, pp. 339-354.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Tertullian, *Apologeticus*, 6.

century to set forth the idea that hostility towards Christianity emanated from bad emperors, and those whom every Roman had cause to hate.

But Trajan, the *optimus princeps* as he was called in his own lifetime, and whose reputation for goodness survived the Middle Ages, when faced with the question put to him by Pliny, who was worried by the prospect of the great number of capital sentences which would have to be pronounced against people who did not seem to be great criminals—Trajan could not avoid the issue, and it is by his reply that we know the principle of the laws directed against the Christians. True, the precise instructions emanating from him constitute already a modification, since he forbids the authorities to take the initiative—an interdiction so radical that the emperors themselves, when Christians boldly declared themselves by addressing to them their apologies for their faith, never answered what might seem to us to be challenges—if they ever know of these—by juridical measures. Nothing shows better the singular and exceptional character of this legislation against the Christians than this disposition, by which the State seemed to take no cognisance of a legal crime so long as the guilty were not specifically pointed out, though it nevertheless punished with death those denounced in the appointed way. It is like a tacit confession of regret at having to punish in virtue of old ordinances, which nevertheless the State did not wish to revoke.

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THE PERSECUTION UNDER THE FLAVIANS AND THE ANTONINES<sup>1</sup>

THE Church had come into collision with the traditions which the Empire represented, and the authorities which embodied them, in a first tragic encounter in the reign of Nero, and from that moment persecution, or more precisely, the constant danger of persecution, the effective realisation of which depended on circumstances, became its lot.

## § I. THE CHURCH UNDER THE FLAVIANS

*The Roman Church under the Flavian Emperors*

But just at first, being little known in spite of all, even after the bloody outburst of the year 64, and benefiting perhaps by the fact that the Emperors who followed Nero did not set out to imitate their predecessor who had left so deplorable a memory, the Church enjoyed a brief period of unquestionable tranquillity. There is

<sup>1</sup> Bibliography.—The general bibliography is the same as that for chapter VII. In addition, there are good monographs dealing with the various Roman emperors of the end of the first and the second century: S. Gsell, *Essai sur le règne de Domitien*, Paris, 1893; R. Paribeni, *Optimus princeps. Saggio sulla storia e sui tempi dell' Imperatore Traiano*, Messina, 1926-1927, 2 vols.; G. Lacour-Gayet, *Antonin le Pieux et son temps*, Paris, 1888.

For the authentic texts of Acts of the Martyrs, see the *Acta Sanctorum* of the Bollandists, the publication of which began in Antwerp in 1643 and is being continued in Brussels; it is a collection undertaken from the first in a scientific spirit which won for it much hostility: a more searching criticism has been made in our own days. A selection of Acts of the Martyrs will be found in Ruinart, *Acta Sincera*, Paris, 1689; Dom H. Leclercq, *Les martyrs*, Paris, 1902-1911, 11 vols.; Knopf, *Ausgewählte Märtyreracten*, in *Sammlung ausgewählter kirchen-und dogmengeschichtlicher Quellenschriften*, 2 Reihe, 2 Heft, Tübingen and Leipzig, 1901; P. Monceaux, *La véritable légende dorée*, Paris, 1928. We must also mention, for the Roman martyrological accounts, A. Dufourcq, *Etude sur les Gesta martyrum romains*, Paris, 1900-1910, 4 vols. The conclusions as to the very low historical value of most of the Roman *Gesta martyrum* has been generally accepted, but the same is not the case with those which attempt to explain their progressive elaboration.

On the Christian martyrs of Lyons in 177, it will be profitable to read C. Jullian, *Histoire de la Gaule*, Vol. IV: *Le gouvernement de Rome*, Paris, 1914, pp. 484-498.

absolutely no indication that in the ephemeral reigns of Galba, Otho and Vitellius, or under the two first Flavian emperors, Vespasian and Titus, Christians were attacked as such. In point of fact, it was then that at Rome, in the very heart of the Empire, Christianity, which there as elsewhere attracted mostly the humble, made also some of its most notable conquests in the highest circles of imperial society.

These conquests had moreover begun even before the first persecution. Already under Nero a great lady, Pomponia Græcina, married to a certain Plautius, a consul whose cousin espoused the emperor Claudius, had become suspect because she led a life which was too austere in the eyes of those of her circle, and had been accused of foreign superstition;<sup>2</sup> it is all the more probable that she had been converted to the Christian faith because subsequently we find the name of the Pomponii fairly well represented in the inscriptions in the Roman catacombs.<sup>3</sup> A. Plautius, her husband, claimed as head of the family the right to judge her according to ancient domestic custom, and declared her innocent. She lived until the reign of Domitian.

### *Converts to Christianity from the Aristocracy*

The Flavians doubtless had no preconceived hostility against a religion which had issued from Judaism. Though they had brought about the ruin of Jerusalem, the siege of which had been begun by Vespasian before he came to the throne, and which had finally collapsed under the blows of Titus in 70, they had admitted into their entourage the representatives of a revived Judaism, including the princess Berenice, of the house of Herod, and the historian Flavius Josephus.

Jewish ideas, which under Nero had possessed a temporary protector in Poppea, enjoyed then a return of favour in Rome, and the tendency towards religious monotheism profited thereby. The situation in Flavian Rome must thus have helped the progress of Christian propaganda even amongst the families of the senatorial aristocracy: after the Pomponii, it made converts amongst the

<sup>2</sup> Tacitus, *Annals*, XIII, 32.

<sup>3</sup> There are Christian inscriptions of a Pomponius Græcinus of the end of the second or beginning of the third century, and of several Pomponii Bassi. Cf. De Rossi, *Roma sotterranea*, Vol. II, p. 281, 362 *et seq.*

Acilii: M. Acilius Glabrio, consul in the year 91, was very probably a Christian, and the oldest Christian cemetery, consecrated to the exclusive and collective use of those belonging to Roman Christianity, was a property of the Acilii on the Via Salaria.<sup>4</sup>

The Imperial house itself provided some converts. Flavius Sabinus, elder brother of Vespasian, was perhaps already a Christian<sup>5</sup> and his son, Flavius Clemens, a cousin german of Titus and Domitian, consul in 95, adopted the Christian faith. His wife Flavia Domitilla followed him, and made to the Roman Church a bequest similar to that of the Acilii, which became the cemetery on the Via Ardeatina still known to-day by their name; their two sons, pupils of Quintilian, who should have succeeded Titus and Domitian, themselves without male issue, also professed Christianity. If the tragic and premature end of Domitian, a natural epilogue to a tyrannical reign, had not annihilated the imperial hopes of these two young men, the Empire would have had at its head Christian princes two hundred years before Constantine.<sup>6</sup>

Another princess of the imperial house, a second Flavia Domitilla, niece of the first, would also have to be counted amongst the illustrious recruits to Christianity in Rome before the end of the first century, if her existence were more certain.<sup>7</sup>

### *The Persecution in Rome under Domitian*

It was upon this flourishing Roman Christianity that, in spite of the bonds which linked some of its members to the throne itself, persecution broke out a second time in the year 95, under Domitian.

This ruler has left the memory of being a fickle tyrant; the philosophers, and all others who had the air of retaining some independence, were or became suspect to him. Moreover, he wanted to react against the spread of Jewish customs which had taken place under the rule of his father and brother. His antipathy towards the Jews was in harmony with his financial necessities, for his

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *infra*, p. 524.

<sup>5</sup> According to the description of his character given by Tacitus, *Hist.*, III, 65 and 75.

<sup>6</sup> The Christianity of Flavius Clemens and his wife Flavia Domitilla is attested by the accusation of atheism made against them by Domitian (Dio Cassius, LXVII, 14; cf. Suetonius, *Domitianus*, 15), and by the fact that the Christian cemetery named after Domitilla, was developed in land belonging to the latter.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *infra*, p. 386.

Treasury was exhausted after the excessive expenses he had incurred in the embellishment of Rome. Accordingly he caused to be levied with great strictness the tax of the didrachma, which the Jews, when independent, had paid to the Temple at Jerusalem, and the right to which had afterwards been claimed by Rome.<sup>8</sup> There were many recalcitrants amongst the proselytes who had adopted the faith of Israel but did not regard themselves as Jews.

Were the Christians who, though distinct from the Jews, were none the less still regarded as a Jewish sect, also called upon to pay the didrachma, and did their very natural resistance call for severe measures? There is, in point of fact, nothing which indicates this: it seems rather that only circumcised people were dealt with as refractory to the tax, and that if punishment was applied, it consisted only of pecuniary penalties. But on the other hand, the measures taken to compel the payment of the didrachma by all the circumcised may quite well have led indirectly to the persecution, by enabling the imperial power to take note of the number of citizens who led what was regarded as a Jewish life, whether they were proselytes of the faith of Moses or followers of that of Jesus.

Thus, so far as Christians were concerned, there was nothing to prevent the penal effect from being applied immediately; all that was required was to set once more in motion the Neronian interdict which had remained in abeyance for thirty years, but of which the murderous capabilities could be activated again at any moment. And this time also, in contrast to what the relative moderation of Trajan will prescribe a little later in requiring a previous accusation, authority took the initiative in the repressive measures. This doubtless explains why Tertullian (*Apologeticus*) says that only the emperors Nero and Domitian were the enemies of the Christians.<sup>9</sup> At this time there were put to death, as guilty of atheism,<sup>10</sup> Flavius Clemens, cousin of the emperor, and the consul, M. Acilius Glabrio, and also on this head, says Dio Cassius,<sup>11</sup> there were condemned "many other citizens who had adopted Jewish customs."

The double accusation of atheism and of Jewish customs seems to us not very coherent, but it is a fact that Christians were often

<sup>8</sup> Suetonius, *Domitianus*, 12.

<sup>9</sup> Similarly Melito of Sardis (about 172), in a passage of his *Apology* quoted by Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.*, IV, 26, 7, says that only Nero and Domitian made the Christian faith a matter of accusation.

<sup>10</sup> Dio Cassius, LXVII, 13.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

treated as atheists, either because they did not worship the gods of the Empire, or else because, precisely as Jews, they did not render worship, at least at first, to material representations of the Deity. The sentences passed were death or the confiscation of goods. The wife of Flavius Clemens, niece herself of Domitian, Flavia Domitilla, was, according to Dio Cassius, exiled to the island of Pandataria. To another island of the Tyrrhenian sea, Pontia, the second Flavia Domitilla, niece to Flavius Clemens, was apparently likewise exiled because of her Christian faith. But this second Flavia is known only by the somewhat late testimonies of Eusebius,<sup>12</sup> who, it is true, cites an unknown pagan of uncertain period, Bruttius, and of St. Jerome.<sup>13</sup> The Acts of Saints Nereus and Achilleus, also brought forward in favour of the historic reality of the second Flavia Domitilla, do not deserve any credence.<sup>14</sup> It is thus possible that there may have been a legendary doubling in the tradition, and that there was only one Flavia Domitilla who was a victim of the persecution under Domitian, the wife of Clemens, exiled in one of the two islands in the Mediterranean assigned as residence for the imperial personages condemned to deportation.<sup>15</sup>

### *The Persecution in the Provinces: Bithynia*

The persecution extended at least to some provinces: in Asia, Bithynia and the province of Asia proper were affected. The passage in Pliny the Younger which gives us information of the persecution under Trajan in Bithynia speaks of apostasies which had followed from threats some twenty years earlier: Christians were thus affected about the year 95.

### *Asia Minor*

In Asia Minor the persecution made, according to tradition, if not a martyr, at least the most glorious of confessors in the person of St. John. A story which we find for the first time in Tertullian<sup>16</sup> says that John was taken from Ephesus to Rome, that he was there

<sup>12</sup> *Hist. Eccles.*, III, 18, 4.

<sup>13</sup> *Epist.*, 108, *ad Eustochium*.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. A. Dufourcq, *Etude sur les Gesta martyrum romains*, Vol. I, Paris, 1900, pp. 251-255.

<sup>15</sup> Dio Cassius, LXVII, 13.

<sup>16</sup> *De præscriptione*, 36.



plunged into a vessel of boiling oil, and that he was then deported to the island of Patmos. The legendary character of the first part of this late narrative prevents us from discerning the exact memories which it may retain, if it be not a complete invention.<sup>17</sup> The exile to Patmos, on the other hand, has in the *Apocalypse* (i, 9) a testimony the value of which is rendered less unfavourable than many critics allow by the previous discussion on the authenticity of the Johannine writings. The *Apocalypse* is also filled on every page with the memory of those who have recently shed their blood for Jesus, and it names two of the great cities of Asia, Pergamum and Smyrna, whose churches have suffered.<sup>18</sup>

### *Palestine*

Lastly, according to the historian Hegesippus, a converted Jew of the second century particularly well informed on Judeo-Christian matters, whose account is transmitted to us by Eusebius,<sup>19</sup> the emperor concerned himself, for reasons other than those which had motivated the persecution, about Palestine, where descendants of the family of Jesus were still living.

But these attracted attention rather as descendants of David. Hegesippus asserts what may be an exaggeration of a less cruel fact, that Domitian had given orders for the destruction of all the survivors of a royal race which worried him. Some descendants of Jude, one of the "brethren of the Lord," were denounced as belonging to it. They were taken to the emperor, who after finding by interrogation that they were of modest condition, and free from any pretention to an earthly kingdom, dismissed them as inoffensive folk. The account adds that they were "respected as martyrs, they governed churches when peace was re-established, and lived until the time of Trajan."<sup>20</sup>

The reference here is to Judeo-Christian churches in the Palestinian region: the family of Jesus remained long in possession of the

<sup>17</sup> The trial of John at Rome would be not at all unlikely in itself, seeing that the emperor insisted on himself interrogating the representatives of the family of Jesus: cf. *infra*.

<sup>18</sup> II, 9, 10, 13. On the legitimate attribution of the martyrs of Pergamum and Smyrna to the persecution under Domitian, cf. E. B. Allo, *Saint Jean, L'Apocalypse*, Paris, 1921, pp. xcvi-ccx, 3rd edn., 1933, pp. ccxxv-ccxxviii.

<sup>19</sup> *Hist. Eccles.*, III, 19 and 20.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Bk. I, p. 307.

honours which the sentiment of these communities, wholly imbued with the Semitic spirit, thought it natural to give to the family which seemed to continue the earthly life of the Master Himself. We gather from this account in the oldest of Christian historians, which there is no serious reason to doubt, that Palestine like all Asia Minor was affected under Domitian by the persecution, since it mentions the "re-establishment of peace."

Peace did return very soon throughout the Empire. Domitian, assassinated in 96, was succeeded by Nerva, who adopted a policy opposite to that of his predecessor, and did not worry about Christians. Then it was, writes Eusebius,<sup>21</sup> that "Nerva having allowed those unjustly exiled to return to their own places, the apostle John was able to leave the island to which he had been sent, and established himself once more at Ephesus, as is stated by a tradition of our elders."

## § 2. THE PERSECUTION UNDER TRAJAN

### *Reign of Nerva*

The reign of Nerva was short—scarcely two years—and so was the peace of the Church. The persecution was renewed under his successor Trajan. But it was sporadic and intermittent in character, and this is explained by the legislation against the Christians; Trajan confined himself to making this more precise by limiting its effects in the way we have already explained.

### *Trajan and the Christians*

Trajan has left the reputation of being one of the greatest and best of the Roman Emperors. The *optimus princeps*<sup>1</sup> was at once a legislator and a conqueror. But he had a very lively sense of the prerogatives of the State, and no leaning towards consideration for particular groups. From the second year of his reign, the year 99, he revived the old law forbidding unauthorised associations. This measure alone would have been sufficient to arouse once more judicial activity against the Christians.

<sup>21</sup> *Hist. Eccles.*, III, 20, 8.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. above, p. 380-1.

*The Question of the Martyrdom of St. Clement*

Did one first and great victim pay his tribute about the year 100 in the person of the then head of Roman Christianity, St. Clement, the third successor of St. Peter after Linus and Anacletus?

Clement is known by a letter to the Church of Corinth which will be dealt with later on, and which shows the head of the Roman Church already busy with the care of other churches. But apart from that, we know nothing positive about him. Was he related to the household of Flavius Clemens in any way? It is possible that he may have been one of his freedmen, and again that he is the same as the Clement mentioned by St. Paul in his epistle to the Philippians (iv, 3). But all this is merely conjectural.

Some Greek *Acts*<sup>2</sup> which are not earlier than the fourth century say, on the other hand, that he was exiled by the government's orders to the Crimean peninsula in the Black Sea, where he continued his apostolate amongst those condemned to the mines, and that as a punishment for this activity he was thrown into the sea with an anchor round his neck. Neither St. Irenæus nor Eusebius nor St. Jerome, who mention Clement, say a single word which suggests this legend; we only know that the tradition of the martyrdom of Clement away from Rome was accepted in the fourth century; but this does not carry much weight in favour of the reality and still less concerning the circumstances of this martyrdom.

*Martyrdom of St. Simeon of Jerusalem*

It is quite otherwise in the case of another illustrious personage of the primitive Church who perished about the same time, Simeon, Bishop of Jerusalem. He was a member of the little group of "brethren of the Lord," and had succeeded James as the head of the Church of Jerusalem, which as we have said seems to have done its best to retain authority in the family of Jesus.

Simeon was of a very advanced age in the year 107, which Eusebius gives for his martyrdom, the account of which he borrows from Hegesippus. But the figure of 120 years transmitted by him, apart from its little intrinsic likelihood, would make Simeon born before Christ. Hence there is probably some error here—such numerical errors are frequent in the texts—but this does not destroy the historical value of the narrative.

<sup>2</sup> Funk, *Patrum apostolorum opera*, Tübingen, 1901, Vol. II, pp. 28-45.

According to Hegesippus, some popular commotions against the Christians had taken place in various cities, and hostile Judeo-Christian heretics, Ebionites or others, had joined forces with them; Simeon was denounced by one of them both as a Christian and as a descendant of David. It would seem that the Roman authority was still uneasy concerning the representatives of the ancient royal race of Israel. In any case the old head of Christianity in Jerusalem was doubly accused before the imperial legate, T. Claudius Atticus, and after long torments, was crucified. The account of Hegesippus adds that his accusers were then convicted of belonging themselves to the family of David and condemned in their turn.<sup>3</sup>

### *Martyrdom of St. Ignatius of Antioch*

But the chief figure in the persecution of Trajan, and the one who has left the most brilliant memory, was Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch. Like Clement of Rome, he was very closely connected with the apostolic generation of which Simeon was perhaps the last survivor, and his letters, like that of Clement to the Church of Corinth, were regarded by the early Church as almost canonical documents.

The Acts of his martyrdom merit little credence, but we know the first stages by his own letters, the authenticity of which has often been attacked, but never, as we shall see, by conclusive arguments.<sup>4</sup>

He was arrested in circumstances unknown to us, perhaps in consequence of some popular commotion, perhaps through a formal denunciation, and was condemned early in 107,<sup>5</sup> evidently by the governor of the province. He was sent to Rome with two companions, Rufus and Zosimus, to be thrown to the beasts, probably on the occasion of the great feasts given by the Emperor after his victories in Dacia, when a certain number of human victims had to lose their lives.

The bishop set out, full of a supernatural joy, certain, as he wrote to the Smyrnians<sup>6</sup> that "under the edge of the sword, as in the midst of wild beasts, he would be always near to God." On

<sup>3</sup> Eusebius, *Chronicle*, ann. 10 of Trajan, *Hist. Eccles.*, III, 32.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *infra*, pp. 419 *et seq.*

<sup>5</sup> Date given in the *Chronicle* of Eusebius.

<sup>6</sup> *Ad Smyrn.*, 4.

his journey from Smyrna, where he made a fairly long stay and met Polycarp the bishop, to Philippi in Macedonia, he wrote seven letters for which he is for ever famous, to the churches of Ephesus, Magnesia, Tralles, Rome, Troas, Philadelphia, and Smyrna.

The letter to the Romans is the best known of all. After heaping praise on Roman Christianity, which leads him to evoke the memory of Peter and Paul, he adjures the faithful of Rome, whom he cannot, he says, command like those apostles, to do nothing to oppose his martyrdom. Any such opposition was not very likely, for its success would have been very doubtful, as a pardon was almost out of the question, and a withdrawal from torture *in extremis* would not have been much use. But some protestations of devotion towards his person had probably reached the bishop, and had led him to fear that he might be saved from death. And so he protests vehemently against any such action. "Allow me," he writes, "to be immolated while the altar is ready. . . . Let me be the prey of wild beasts; by them I shall attain to God. I am God's grain: let me be ground by the teeth of wild beasts, so that I may become the pure bread of Christ." So it came to pass, and Ignatius was "ground" by the wild beasts, perhaps in the Colosseum, if this building, begun under Domitian, was then sufficiently advanced.

### *The Persecution in Bithynia and Pontus*

Lastly there was one more province, or rather a group of provinces, in the Asiatic domain of Rome, in which, as we are informed by one of the most precious testimonies we possess, the persecution raged under Trajan's rule. This was Bithynia and Pontus, placed in 111 under the government of Pliny the Younger. He wrote a letter to the Emperor and received from him a reply, which are both famous, and of which we have already spoken.<sup>7</sup>

We learn from this correspondence that, less than a hundred years after the death of Christ, Christianity had made marvellous progress in the northern portion of Asia Minor, and this not only in the towns but also in the country parts. Pliny may have exaggerated a situation which had disturbed him, but would he have wholly invented the statement that the temples were being abandoned and that some of the ceremonies could not take place for lack of participants?

<sup>7</sup> Cf. above, pp. 375, 378.

The former governors, annual proconsuls drawn by lot from among the senators, had remained inactive. But the two provinces had just changed their regime by coming under the direct administration of the Emperor: Pliny arrived there as imperial legate, *legatus Augusti proprætor*. This fact apparently emboldened the opponents of the innovators, and the denunciations began. The number of accusations, and consequently of those who should be victims, naturally worried Pliny, who was not a bloodthirsty man. Hence his questions to his prince. We know the latter's reply.

The reply is merely a simple application of an established legislation, but by the more precise instructions rendered necessary by the questions of an embarrassed magistrate it fixes a jurisprudence still vague in its details, and by limiting the initiative of the authorities it somewhat softens the rigour of principles which nevertheless remain inflexible. Trajan also rejects anonymous accusations—a very important restriction. But we cannot doubt that many Christians had already perished in Bithynia, for Pliny, whose moderation multiplied the interrogatories in the hope of obtaining an abjuration, expressly says that he had sent to death all those who persisted in their "disobedience and their invincible obstinacy."<sup>8</sup> He asserts nevertheless that the deserted temples are once more frequented, and that the sacrifices have begun again—official optimism, doubtless, to a large extent, but there may well have been a certain number of apostates as well as martyrs.

### *The Persecution in Macedonia*

One European province of the Empire seems also to have experienced the rigorous measures of Trajan against the Christians: Macedonia. A letter from one of the best known bishops of the Eastern Church, Polycarp of Smyrna, written in the first half of the second century, mentions some martyrs in the city of Philippi, and also commemorates St. Ignatius, who passed by that city on his way to Rome. "Practise," Polycarp writes to the Philippians, "the patience of which you have seen models with your eyes not only in the blessed Ignatius, Zosimus and Rufus, but also in others from amongst yourselves."<sup>9</sup> These words do not make it absolutely certain that the Philippian martyrs were chronologically near to St. Ignatius, but they make it at least very probable.

<sup>8</sup> *Epist. cit.*, *supra*, p. 378 n. 6.

<sup>9</sup> Polycarp, *Ad Philippenses*. On this letter, cf. p. 378, n. 6.

## § 3. THE PERSECUTION UNDER HADRIAN

*The Emperor Hadrian and the Christians*

The reign of Hadrian brought no marked change in the condition of the Christians; but it somewhat diminished the danger which constantly threatened them. This voluptuous *græculus*<sup>1</sup> could have no sympathy for Christianity, but this great administrator, who would never dream of weakening a law calculated to promote public security, had an intense dislike for disorders, and he could only condemn energetically the tumultuous conditions in which the accusations against the Christians were so often made. Particularly in the East, where religious passions were more excitable and superstitions more active, the popular sentiment towards the Christians more than once culminated in violence which reached as far as public authority itself.

The second century was the period when Christianity had come forth from its original obscurity, but was not yet as well known as it would be in the next century, and it was a prey to all kinds of calumnies arising out of ignorance and misapprehension. What did the crowds not imagine about it! Ritual murders, bloody communions, sacred banquets culminating in shameful orgies, magic, ideas compared with which that of the supposed adoration of a god with an ass's head appears a mere inoffensive pleasantry—such were the rumours current about the Christians amongst the simple folk, always ready to believe the worst, and echoed sometimes even by the learned.<sup>2</sup> They were increased by the great complaint in which government and people joined, that Christians withdrew themselves from their fellow citizens by not worshipping the gods, and the rulers who were themselves divine. It is not surprising that such ideas caused trouble and disturbances. Accusations against the Christians were sometimes accompanied by veritable riots. An emperor like Hadrian was not the man to favour such things.

On the other hand, there were magistrates whom the cold rigour of the official doctrine did not free perhaps from all scruples as to what was to be done in presence of passionate denunciations, and were not always disposed to give way blindly to popular clamour.

<sup>1</sup> This nickname had been given him because of his delight in all hellenic things.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *infra*, p. 514.

Some there were who asked the Emperor for fresh elucidations. The proconsul of Asia, Licinius Granianus, amongst others, wrote to Hadrian setting forth his doubts. The imperial reply reached Granianus's successor, Minicius Fundanus, about the year 124.<sup>3</sup> It maintained the existing law, but clarified the formalities of procedure, in order to safeguard public order and to stop abuses, by forbidding the introduction of tumultuous processes, and requiring an individual and regular act of accusation, and a list of proved juridical crimes, and also by ordering the punishment of calumniators. By thus restricting the facility of denunciation and making accusers run the risk of being themselves accused of calumny should their victims suddenly apostatise, it somewhat lessened the danger which constantly threatened the Christians, though it did not remove it entirely.

### *Martyrs in Italy*

Even so, there were certainly fairly numerous martyrdoms in the reign of Hadrian; but several of those explicitly attributed to him are known only by *Acts* of no value, while in the case of other persons, whose names come to us from sources better than that of *Passions* subject to caution, the chronological localisation is not more than probable. Such is the case with Pope Telesphorus, who seems to have been put to death under Hadrian, as his pontificate apparently ended in 136, though it may have lasted till 138 or even later, which would bring his end to the reign of Antoninus.<sup>4</sup> A

<sup>3</sup> Text in St. Justin, *Apology*, I, 68; Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.*, IV, 9; Rufinus, *Hist. Eccles.*, IV, 9. The authentic text is partly given in a Greek translation by Eusebius. This writer speaks of the letter of Granianus also in his *Chronicle*, *Olymp.* 226, thinking that the very principle of Trajan's legislation was involved, and that the rescript modified it. But that is unlikely. Dom Capelle, *Le rescrit d'Hadrien et saint Justin*, in *Revue Benedictine*, 1927, p. 365, has again endeavoured to defend this interpretation of the rescript, which is that of St. Justin, by showing that the text annexed to his *Apology* was really written by him. The comparison between the language of the *Apology* and the introduction to the rescript seems conclusive on the matter of authenticity. But it does not at all follow that Justin correctly interpreted the rescript itself: his very benign interpretation might favour his apologetic thesis, but all the known facts contradict the thesis of a substantial modification of previous legislation. Cf. Callewaert, *Le rescrit d'Hadrien*, in *Revue d'histoire et de littérature religieuses*, Vol. VIII, 1903, pp. 152 *et seq.*, who also shows that the doubts sometimes entertained on the authenticity of the rescript, mainly because of the defective interpretation given to it, are without foundation.

<sup>4</sup> Martyrs known by St. Irenæus (Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.*, V, 6).



certain Alexander, sometimes wrongly identified with the first pope of this name, was also probably a Roman martyr in the time of Hadrian, together with his companions Hermes, Quirinus, Eventius and Theodulus. Getulus, his wife Symphorosa, and their seven sons, perished in Sabina.

Other martyred saints are honoured in Umbria. Local traditional cults and inclusion in the martyrologies guarantee the historic reality and death for the Faith of some, but their *Acts* appear subject to such doubt that it is best merely to register their names.

### *The Jewish Rebellion of Bar Kokhba and the Christians*

We also lack details concerning a local but violent persecution which in Hadrian's reign caused Christians to suffer for another reason. The bloody Jewish revolt of Bar Kokhba had fearful results for them: Justin in his first *Apology*<sup>5</sup> writes that Bar Kokhba "caused Christians, and Christians only, to suffer the last torments if they would not deny and blaspheme Jesus Christ."

## § 4. THE PERSECUTION UNDER ANTONINUS

### *The Emperor Antoninus and the Christians*

The Emperor Antoninus, who succeeded his adoptive father Hadrian in 138, undoubtedly tended by nature to be more benevolent in regard to the Christians. He did not indeed modify the rigorous legislation under which they still remained, but like Hadrian, and perhaps with greater willingness and desire to avoid the shedding of blood, he forbade any giving way to popular commotions against them, as is shown by four rescripts addressed by him to the cities of Larissa, Thessalonica, Athens, and the provincial assembly of Achaia.<sup>1</sup> He has also been credited with a much more favourable rescript addressed to the provincial assembly of Asia, forbidding denunciations; but although Eusebius has preserved this document in his *Ecclesiastical History* (IV, 13), attributing it, however, to Marcus Aurelius, its apocryphal character is plain. The principles of the legislation itself were not changed. The Christians did indeed make at this time a great effort to persuade

<sup>5</sup> XXXI, 6.

<sup>1</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.*, IV, 26, 10.

people to recognise the harmlessness, if not the beneficial character, of their religion. But these apologetic endeavours, the first of which in date was that of Marcianus Aristides, a contemporary of Hadrian, and which are dealt with in detail in a later chapter, did not have the wished-for result.

### *Martyrdom of St. Polycarp of Smyrna*

The imperial orders themselves were not always obeyed. The most illustrious martyr who suffered under Antoninus,<sup>2</sup> Polycarp Bishop of Smyrna, was a victim of a veritable popular uprising, to which Quadratus, the proconsul of Asia, gave way. We know of this event, so glorious for the church of Smyrna, through a letter it sent to the church of Philomelium and all the communities "belonging to the holy universal Church."<sup>3</sup> Twelve Christians were denounced, condemned, and thrown to the beasts in 155; one of them, however, named Quintus, weakened at the last moment, sacrificed to the gods, and swore by the genius of the emperor. But the crowd was not satisfied, and called for the bishop.

The request was out of order, but the proconsul allowed it nevertheless. Polycarp was dragged to the amphitheatre, and in the governor's box was called on to shout, "Down with the atheists." Polycarp consented to do so, having no difficulty in agreeing with the populace in a declaration which he nevertheless made in an altogether different sense. But when he was ordered to curse Christ, he replied: "For eighty-six years now I have served him; he has never done me evil. How could I blaspheme my king and my

<sup>2</sup> The martyrdom of St. Polycarp was long put in the reign of Marcus Aurelius, on the strength of a statement in Eusebius. Waddington, *Fastes des provinces asiatiques*, Vol. I, Paris, 1872, pp. 219 *et seq.*, and also in *Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, Vol. XVI, 1867, p. 219, showed, by the list of governors of the province of Asia, that the martyrdom took place under Antoninus. Although the ancient chronology has still been defended by J. Reville, *La date du martyre de saint Polycarpe*, in *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, III, 1881, p. 369, it must be abandoned. The confusion between Antoninus and Marcus Aurelius, who was also known by the name of his adoptive father, Antoninus, is not at all surprising. Cf. also F. X. Funk, *Patres apostolici*, Vol. I, 3rd edn., Tübingen, 1913, pp. xciv *et seq.*

The more exact dating of Polycarp's death was the work of C. H. Turner's paper in *Studia Biblica*, Vol. II, 1887, pp. 105-55. Turner showed that the only date which accounts for all the data is February 22nd, 156. There is an annotated translation of the *Martyrdom* in Owen, *Some Authentic Acts of the Early Martyrs*, Oxford, 1927, pp. 31 *et seq.*

<sup>3</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.*, V, 18, 9.

saviour?" He was finally burnt alive on a fire of wood made ready by a crowd consisting alike of Jews and pagans.

There were also under Antoninus other victims of pagan hatred: at Jerusalem, Mark the Bishop; in Rome, Popes Hyginus and Pius I, and about 160, a Christian priest or catechist called Ptolemy, and two laymen one of whom bore the name of Lucius. Their condemnation is narrated at the beginning of the second *Apology* of Justin: a husband, angry at the conversion of his wife, accused Ptolemy of having perverted her, and as the accused confessed to being a Christian, he was immediately condemned to death by Lollius Urbicus, the prefect of the city; the two other Christians, who were present in the crowd, manifested their belief and shared the same fate.

## § 5. THE PERSECUTION UNDER MARCUS AURELIUS

### *Marcus Aurelius and the Christians*

The reign of Marcus Aurelius witnessed more martyrdoms, and some of them are amongst the most famous in all the history of the persecutions. It was not that Marcus Aurelius in any way added to the legislation concerning the Christians: he maintained it, like his predecessors, but perhaps with more contemptuous inflexibility. He was humane as a philosopher, but had nothing but a haughty disdain for a sect which seemed to him to set little store by intelligence, and welcomed sufferings with a readiness which he regarded as an undignified affectation. Moreover, as a ruler he was fully conscious of his duties towards the Empire, and could not suffer rebels. Hence his severity.

But the much greater frequency in his reign of the applications of a principle always in force is not to be imputed to him alone. It has its explanation in the circumstances, the growth of popular animosity, due perhaps itself to public misfortunes, war, epidemics, or cataclysms the responsibility for which was laid by superstition on the Christians. Perhaps also the progress of Christian propaganda had something to do with it, for popular ignorance continued to regard Christians as enemies of the gods, of morality, and of the Empire. And this animosity more than once forced the hands of the magistrates.

*Martyrs in Rome*

This was the case, in the last years of the reign, in the trial of the martyrs of Lyons. But some fifteen years earlier, possibly in 162, there were put to death at Rome, after a regular denunciation, St. Felicitas and seven other martyrs regarded by tradition as her sons, and in any case related to her.<sup>1</sup>

Between 163 and 167, a legal accusation made by the Cynic philosopher Crescens similarly brought about the appearance before the prefect of Rome, Junius Rusticus, confidant of Marcus Aurelius, of the Christian philosopher and apologist Justin. He was arrested with some other believers, probably his disciples, amongst them being a woman, Charity, and a slave of Cæsar's household, Evelpistus. The essential question, "Are you a Christian?" brought the reply: "Yes, I am." Then followed the sentence: "Those who have refused to sacrifice to the gods and obey the orders of the Emperor are to be scourged and taken away to suffer the penalty of death, in conformity with the laws." The execution took place immediately.<sup>2</sup>

*Martyrs in Greece*

The Churches in Greece also suffered, for a letter from Dionysius, Bishop of Corinth, to Pope Soter about 170, thanks the latter for sending help to the Christians condemned to the mines, and another letter of the same Dionysius mentions the martyrdom of Publius, Bishop of Athens.<sup>3</sup>

*Martyrs in Asia Minor*

Sagaris, apparently bishop of Laodicea in Asia Minor, where he was buried, perished in the proconsulate of Sergius Paulus, i.e., be-

<sup>1</sup> On the historical value of the *Passion* of St. Felicitas, see a summary of the various views in P. Allard, *Histoire des persécutions pendant les deux premiers siècles*, Paris, 1909, 3rd edn., p. 378, n. 2. It is worthy of note that the base of a small column coming from a ciborium and found in the ancient Catacomb of Priscilla bears the names of the martyrs Felix, Philip, Vitalis and Martial, mentioned in the *Passion* as sons of Felicitas. [English tr. of the *Passion* in Owen, *op. cit.*, pp. 74 *et seq.* Another by W. H. Sheering, London, 1931.—Tr.]

<sup>2</sup> *Acta Sancti Iustini*, in Otto, *Corpus Apologetarum Christianorum sæculi secundi*, Vol. III, Jena, 1879, pp. 266-278. Engl. tr. in Owen, *op. cit.*, pp. 47 *et seq.*

<sup>3</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.*, IV, 23.

tween 164 and 166; another Asiatic, Thraseas, Bishop of Eumenia, suffered probably at the same time.<sup>4</sup>

Other Christians in Italy and Greece were condemned to forced labour in the mines. Doubtless the denunciations multiplied, and the hostility of the populace increased. Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch under Marcus Aurelius, says that "the Christians were constantly persecuted. The most pious were continually stoned, and sometimes even put to death."<sup>5</sup> This doubtless refers to popular violence. But the events of 177 at Lyons shows that this could always lead to action by the magistrates.

### *The Martyrs at Lyons in 177*

The martyrs of Lyons have, so to speak, told their own story in an ever-famous document, the letter of the church of Lyons to the churches of Asia, Phrygia and Rome,<sup>6</sup> one of the most beautiful documents of Christian antiquity, in which an account of the cruellest sufferings is given in a very simple manner; nevertheless it breathes all the ardour of the combat entered into for the love of Christ, and in it we find men threatened with the worst torments still anxious about all that concerned the universal church in their time. In particular they concerned themselves with the Montanist prophetic movement then troubling Asia Minor, and endeavoured to bring back to unity those who were going astray.

The church of Lyons was indeed, as far as we can judge from the information in the letter, partly of Asiatic origin and composition. Its head, Bishop Pothinus, over 90 years of age in 177, had been a disciple of St. Polycarp of Smyrna, and the names of several of its members show them to be Orientals, such as the Phrygian doctor Alexander, "long established," nevertheless, "amongst the Gauls."

The indigenous element was also represented;<sup>7</sup> and there were in this young Christian community some notable Gallo-Romans such as Vettius Epagathus, a Roman citizen, described in the letter as a Christian wholly filled with the Holy Spirit. There was also amongst the faithful summoned before the Roman magistrate at Lyons at least one representative of the church of Vienne, the

<sup>4</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.*, V, 24.

<sup>5</sup> *Ad Autolychum*, III.

<sup>6</sup> In Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.*, V, 24, English tr. in Owen, *op cit.*, pp. 53 *et seq.*

<sup>7</sup> In the list in the *Hieronymian Martyrology*, about half the names are Greek, and the other half Latin.

deacon Sanctus. Were the two churches really one community, under one head, in spite of the fact that they were in two different civil provinces, that of Lyons and Narbonne? Possibly so, and perhaps this is the most natural explanation of the one common measure taken against them. But there is nothing which formally excludes the hypothesis of two distinct churches, or that members of the one, that of Vienne, were involved in consequence of their momentary presence in Lyons in the process against their brethren.

From the point of view of public law, however, a common trial before one governor of people belonging to two different provinces might cause some surprise. But this admits of explanation: the Christians of Vienne—and it must be borne in mind that we know only one, the deacon Sanctus, who definitely came from there—may have been arrested at Lyons where they happened to be at the moment; or if the two churches had only one head, they may have been proceeded against as accomplices of their brethren at Lyons.

These latter found a more aggressive attitude taken up towards them by the pagans in the last years of the reign of Marcus Aurelius. The most ridiculous calumnies were re-echoed, and vexations multiplied: exclusion from the baths, markets, and even from the "houses" (which doubtless means that people refused to let houses to Christians, or expelled them from private meeting places),<sup>8</sup> and ill treatment of every kind: "They were insulted, beaten, dragged about, robbed, stoned, and confined together."<sup>9</sup>

The agitation increased at the beginning of August, on the eve of the feasts of Rome and Augustus, the annual manifestation of imperial loyalty which the Christians were bitterly accused of not observing. Did the movement become so hostile that the local authorities decided that they must intervene by taking the initiative in arrests though this was excluded by the imperial rescripts? Or were the Christians taken before them? We know that the governor was absent, and that the municipal magistrates and the tribune of the urban cohort stationed at Lyons took them, tortured them, and kept them in prison awaiting the return of the imperial legate. About ten of those tortured gave way, but most of these repented afterwards. But one serious feature was that some pagan slaves employed by the Christians, some of whom were of sufficient social

<sup>8</sup> Thus Owen, *op. cit.*, p. 138 n. He adds, however, that the word is thought by some to refer to public buildings.—Tr.

<sup>9</sup> Eusebius, *loc. cit.*, 6.

rank to have servants, when put to the question, consented to confess to having witnessed scenes of incest and anthropophagy. Nothing further was necessary to persuade more than ever people already disposed to believe wholly in the reality of these crimes.

The tortures were repeated for several days, in the course of which the aged bishop Pothinus, "who could scarcely breathe because of the exhaustion of his body, but who was upheld by the ardour of the Spirit,"<sup>10</sup> died in prison, and the apostates, ashamed of their weakness, proclaimed once more their faith in Christ. The legate when he returned pronounced the inevitable sentence of death: Sanctus the deacon of Vienne, Maternus the neophyte, the very young slave Blandina, and the Asiatic Attalus of Pergamum, one of the most prominent members of the community in Lyons, were condemned to the wild beasts.

But before Attalus died, it was discovered that he was a Roman citizen: troubled, it seems, by this discovery, and by the number of executions still awaiting, the legate wrote to the Emperor. The reply was as it was bound to be: the confessors of the faith were to die, but renegades were to be set at liberty.<sup>11</sup> Very few of these latter remained, for almost all, at their last appearance, returned to the side where death awaited them, to the astonishment of the pagans and the joy of the other Christians.

Those of the condemned who were Roman citizens were beheaded, except Attalus who, in spite of his status, was thrown to the beasts with the general body. Alexander, the Phrygian doctor, perished in the same manner. The last to suffer, whose apostasy was doubtless hoped for right to the end, were Ponticus, a lad of fifteen years, and Blandina, the young slave, who constantly animated her companions by the example of her courage and by her words. She suffered at the last alone: "Like a noble mother who had just exhorted her children and sent them to their King, she repeated herself the whole series of their combats, and hastened to them, full of joy and exulting in her end."<sup>12</sup> By the heroism with which

<sup>10</sup> *Loc. cit.*, 29.

<sup>11</sup> If the governor had not himself proceeded to this relaxation, called for by the legislation of Trajan, it may have been because he had submitted to pressure from the hostile populace, or else, as Babut remarks (*art. cit.* above, p. 378, n. 6 of the article) because he regarded the Christians as guilty of crimes against common law, as attributed to them by popular hostility, and that this seemed to justify their proscription.

<sup>12</sup> *Loc. cit.*, 55.

she bore the tortures, she won the admiration of the pagans themselves, for these "confessed that never amongst them had a woman endured such manifold and cruel tortures."<sup>13</sup>

The Christian community in Lyons, almost fifty brethren of which<sup>14</sup> thus died, seemed to be decimated. But it was to be re-constituted almost at once under the direction of the priest Irenæus, who, having escaped the persecution, was charged to carry to Pope Eleutherus a letter similar to that addressed to the churches of Asia and Phrygia. Shortly afterwards Irenæus became bishop of Lyons.

### *More Martyrs at Rome*

Finally, towards the end of the reign of Marcus Aurelius, between June 177 and March 180, a time suggested by a note in the martyrology of Ado, there were new martyrs in Rome: St. Cecilia, of the illustrious Roman family of the Cæciliï, and the three companions joined with her in the earliest martyrological tradition, Valerian, Tibertius and Maximus. The *Passion* which represents Cecilia as the virgin spouse of Valerian, brother to Tiburtius, is only a late romance; but the account it gives of the death of Cecilia, condemned to be suffocated in the bath of her own house, and finally decapitated, has been at least partially confirmed by remarkable archæological discoveries. Cecilia was buried near to the papal crypt in the cemetery afterwards named after Pope Callistus, in a piece of land belonging to her family; the latter subsequently presented it to the Church, and this explains the proximity of the saint's burial place to that of the Popes of later times.<sup>15</sup>

### *The Episode of the "Thundering Legion"*

In contrast with all these quite certain facts of the persecution, a legendary account, which was once regarded with some favour though it merits none, attributes to the Emperor Marcus Aurelius a change of attitude towards the Christians, which came about in a very unexpected manner. This is the story of the famous prodigy

<sup>13</sup> Eusebius, *loc. cit.*, 56.

<sup>14</sup> The *Hieronymian Martyrology* (ed. Rossi-Duchesne, n. 73), gives forty-eight names.

<sup>15</sup> On the value of the Acts of St. Cecilia, cf. A. Dufourcq, *Etude sur les Gesta martyrum romains*, Vol. I, Paris, 1900.



of the "Thundering Legion," narrated in Tertullian's *Apologeticus*<sup>16</sup> and Eusebius's *Ecclesiastical History*<sup>17</sup> as follows: During a campaign against the Quadri in 174, the Roman army, on the point of perishing by thirst, and attacked by the enemy, was saved by a providential storm due to the prayers of the Christian soldiers of the *Legio XII Fulminata*. Thereupon Marcus Aurelius sent a message to the Senate, informing them of this miraculous event, and in gratitude published a kind of edict of toleration which even enacted penalties "against the accusers of the Christians." This is an invention the improbability of which is evident, especially in view of the fact that a pagan tradition attributing the army's salvation to Jupiter coexists with the Christian tradition, and that the latter is again at fault in supposing that the name of *Fulminata* was given to the Twelfth Legion in consequence of the prodigy, whereas it possessed it previously.

That does not mean that everything is to be rejected in a tradition found immediately after the events: the danger in which the imperial troops were, and the rain which descended in a named place, the memory of which is recalled by the Antonine column in Rome, are not to be called in question. And why should we refuse to allow that this salutary rain may have been asked for from heaven not only by pagan soldiers but also by their Christian comrades who may have been very numerous in a detachment of the legion coming from Syria, where the Twelfth Legion was stationed at that time? But whether Marcus Aurelius knew of it or not, he did not in any way deviate from the principles put in force by his predecessors and recalled by himself in regard to Christians.

## § 6. PERSECUTION AND PEACE UNDER COMMODUS

### *The Emperor Commodus and the Christians*

But better times came to the Church with the reign of the son and successor of Marcus Aurelius, Commodus. There might have been a tendency among early Christian apologists to represent as persecutors only those emperors who had left the worst memories, and Nero and Domitian filled this office well. The quite relative

<sup>16</sup> 5.

<sup>17</sup> V, 5, 2-6.

moderation of the Antonines suggested a very tempting contrast; these great Antonines, conscientious rulers deeply imbued with the Roman tradition, were none the less and even because of that, fundamentally intractable towards Christianity.

Commodus, on the contrary, though son by blood of Marcus Aurelius, was not in the same moral line: he was careless of his real duties as sovereign, in contrast to Domitian, and much prone to violence, and the Roman Senate in condemning his memory could call him more impure than Nero and more cruel than Domitian.<sup>1</sup> But his political indifference itself explains why he showed himself to be less inflexible than his immediate predecessors in regard to a religion these had looked on as a danger to the State. Certainly his rule marks an incontestable change in the relations between the Church and the Empire.

### *African Martyrs*

But this did not take place all at once. In the beginning of the reign of Commodus, we find the first Christian martyrs in Africa whose memory has come down to us.

Twelve Christians in the little town of Scillium, in the part of Numidia dependent on the proconsular province, were delated in 180 to the proconsul, Vigellius Saturninus, who resided at Carthage. They boldly professed their faith and refused to sacrifice to the gods or to swear by the genius of the emperor, and accordingly they were condemned to die by the sword, and were executed on the spot.<sup>2</sup> It is quite likely that the martyrs of Scillium were indeed the first martyrs in the African Church, for Tertullian asserts that Vigellius Saturninus began the measures of bloody repression in this province.<sup>3</sup> We might infer from this that this church was then at least relatively young, which would not exclude the possibility that there was a previous period in which a small number of faithful may have lived obscurely without being disturbed.

Many have put before the martyrs of Scillium, who appeared

<sup>1</sup> "Sæviior Domitiano, impurius Nerone" (*Historia Augusta, Vita Commodi*, 19, 21).

<sup>2</sup> Passion of the Scillitan martyrs in Ruinat, *Acta Sincera*, pp. 77-81; Aube, *Etude sur un nouveau texte des Actes des Martyrs Scillitains*, Paris, 1881. Cf. De Smedt in *Analecta Bollandiana*, Vol. VIII, 1889, pp. 6-8. English tr. in Owen, *op. cit.*, pp. 71 *et seq.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ad Scapulam*, 3: "primus hic gladium in nos egit."

before the governor of Africa on July 16th, a group of martyrs of Madaura put to death on July 4th of the same year, 180. Unfortunately these latter martyrs, who bear native names, and the leader of which, Namphamo, has been called *archimartyr*, i.e., doubtless protomartyr of Africa, were most probably not witnesses to the Christian faith who became victims of the imperial persecutions, but fanatical followers of the Donatist schism, executed probably in the fourth century for having taken part in the crimes committed by the most extreme members of the sect known as the Circumcellians.<sup>4</sup>

### *Martyrs in Asia Minor*

A few years later, about 184 or 185, the province of Asia was once more the scene of persecutions. The proconsul Arrius Antoninus, who was himself to be accused of aspiring to the Empire and was put to death in 188, acted according to Tertullian<sup>5</sup> in an especially cruel way.

Did he favour denunciations? Did he use torture more rigorously to obtain confessions or apostasies? Did he condemn his victims to more exquisite tortures? We know that as a kind of protest, the Christians of a town in Asia, where he was holding his assizes, presented themselves one day in a body at his tribunal to be dealt with by him. Their great number made him afraid: he arrested a few and sent the others away, saying to them: "Miserable people, if you wish to die, have you not sufficient ropes and precipices?"<sup>6</sup>

### *Martyrdom of Apollonius at Rome*

Rome had an illustrious martyr under Commodus in the person of the senator Apollonius, a new example of the penetration of Christianity into the highest ranks of Roman aristocracy. Denounced as a Christian by one of his slaves, whose reward was merely to be executed himself, in accordance with the stipulations of an ancient law which forbade slaves to delate their masters, Apollonius read before a full meeting of the Senate an Apology for

<sup>4</sup> Cf. J. Baxter, *The Martyrs of Madaura*, A.D. 180, in *Journal of Theological Studies*, Vol. XXIV, 1924, pp. 21-37.

<sup>5</sup> *Ad Scapulam*, 5.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

the Christian Faith, but he was none the less finally beheaded, in virtue of the existing legislation, still in force, as is shown by his *Acts*.<sup>7</sup>

### *The Peace of the Church under Commodus*

Nevertheless, the political situation underwent a change. Commodus had a favourite, Marcia, who had entered his palace as a slave and finished by becoming his wife, though without the title of Augusta. Now Marcia was a Christian by faith if not by baptism; her conduct had not perhaps been always in conformity with the Gospel ideal, but she was doubtless well disposed, and in any case she did what she could to ameliorate the lot of her brethren.

And so from this moment, in spite of the evident paradox in such a situation, there were Christians in the Imperial court. One of them, the freedman Proxenes, even became Commodus's chamberlain.<sup>8</sup> This favour accorded to Christians by a prince indifferent to a political tradition more than a century old evidently did not pass unnoticed, and the magistrates took account of this change of atmosphere. An African proconsul, for instance, made no secret of the excuses he accepted in order to absolve the Christians deferred to his tribunal.<sup>9</sup> Marcia herself obtained from Commodus the pardon of confessors condemned to forced labour, juridically a capital penalty, in the mines of Sardinia. Pope Victor (189-197) gave a list of these confessors, and the priest Hyacinth, foster-father and friend of Marcia, went to free the prisoners, amongst whom was a future Pope, Callistus.<sup>10</sup>

For the first time, a pardon was granted to Christians condemned for their religion, without any denial, even feigned, of their Faith; and the two powers, ecclesiastical and imperial, agreed in the appli-

<sup>7</sup> The martyrdom of Apollonius, known through Eusebius (*Hist. Eccles.*, V 21) and various redactions of his *Passion*, presents some difficulties. But the torture of the *delator*, if he was indeed the slave of the accused, is understandable, as is also the reading of the Apology, if Apollonius did indeed belong to the Senate. More embarrassing is the attributing of the introduction of the process before the Senate to the prefect of the *prætorium*, whereas the competent authority was the prefect of the city. But the *prætorian* prefect may have acted by delegation from the emperor. The literature of the subject is given in Duchesne, *Histoire ancienne de l'Eglise*, Vol. I, p. 251, n. 3.

<sup>8</sup> J. B. de Rossi, *Inscriptiones christianæ Urbis Romæ*, 5.

<sup>9</sup> Tertullian, *Ad Scapulam*, 4.

<sup>10</sup> St. Hippolytus, *Philosophoumena*, IX, 11.

cation of the decision made. An unexpected *modus vivendi* seems to have been established between the Church and the Empire. It was due doubtless to a relaxing of the rigid principles from which none of the Antonines had previously thought himself able to deviate. But the increase in the number of the Christians, shown by the very multiplicity of the condemnations, their penetration even into the interior of the palace,<sup>11</sup> and the ease with which the provincial authorities adapted themselves to the new situation might well have signified that the previous system would not work. The one bad emperor in the second century became, doubtless without knowing it, more just than all his glorious predecessors by performing the first act of benevolence towards the Church that she had as yet enjoyed.

Henceforth, in order that rigours should once more be applied, at least with some fulness and some duration, new imperial initiatives would be required, although the preceding legislation had not been abrogated.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Irenæus, *Adversus hæreses*, IV, 30, 1 (1065).

## CHAPTER X

# THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS AND THEIR TIMES <sup>1</sup>

WHEN passing from the history of Jesus to that of the apostles, we noted the infinite distance separating the Master from the disciples. "One is your master, Christ": these words of Jesus come home with an irresistible force to anyone who compares the discourses of the Lord reported in the Gospels with the letters of the Apostles. In turning from the apostolic writings to study the early documents of the history of the Church, we have a similar feeling—less keenly, no doubt, but still strongly. Coming out of the Holy of Holies, we were still in the Sanctuary; now we are in the Temple precincts. The apostles, guided by the Holy Spirit, spoke in its name with an infallible authority. Now they are all dead, and their successors, even the greatest and holiest, realise that they are beneath those whom they replace. St. Clement writes to the Corinthians: "Let us have before our eyes the excellent apostles," and he celebrates the glory of Peter and Paul (*Clem.*, V); St. Ignatius, similarly, writes in his letter to the Romans (*Rom.* iv, 3): "I do not give you orders, as did Peter and Paul: they were apostles, I am only a condemned man." The years which follow in the course of the second century do not lessen this distance but increase it; they magnify the incomparable authority of the apostles. Very soon apocryphal works will circulate under their venerated names: *Preaching of Peter*, *Apocalypse of Peter*, *Letters of the Apostles*, *Acts of Paul*, John, Peter, or Thomas; all these pious frauds manifest the unequalled prestige of the apostles themselves.

This will be confirmed by Catholic theology: it recognises that down to the death of the last apostle, the deposit of revelation was progressively enriched, that, as St. Paul writes, "the mystery of Christ was not in other generations known to the sons of men as it is now revealed to his holy apostles and prophets" (*Ephes.* iii, 4-5). After the death of the apostles, there will be no new addition: "As soon as we believe," Tertullian will say, "we have no more

<sup>1</sup> Bibliography.—See the notes at the beginning of the treatment of each of the Apostolic Fathers.

need to believe anything further. For the first article of our belief is that there is nothing further which we ought to believe.”<sup>2</sup>

At the same time, this deposit is not lifeless or inert; as St. Irenæus will shortly say, “It is as a precious deposit contained in an excellent vessel; the Spirit ever renews its youth and communicates its youthfulness to the vessel containing it.”<sup>3</sup> Hence when studying the history of the Church, our effort will be to reach towards this deep life which the documents reveal to those who understand them. When leaving His apostles after the appearance in Galilee, the Lord promised to remain with them until the consummation of the world. The whole development of history since then manifests the realisation of this promise; if our exposition is faithful to its subject, it will bring out this divine life which rejuvenates the pagan world and reveals itself by its fruits of truth and grace.

## § I. ST. CLEMENT OF ROME <sup>4</sup>

We are fortunate to find at the outset of this history some documents of undeniable authenticity, which give us through the

<sup>2</sup> *De præscriptione*, VII, 13.

<sup>3</sup> St. Irenæus, IV, 24, 1.

<sup>4</sup> The letter of St. Clement has been transmitted to us in Greek in two manuscripts. The *Alexandrinus*, in fifth century uncials, is, as everyone knows, one of the chief authorities for the New Testament: cf. F. C. Kenyon, *Handbook to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, London, 1912, pp. 72-77; Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers*, I, 1, London, 1890, pp. 116-121; but there is a great gap in this manuscript (LVII, 6—LXIII, 4). In 1875 a second manuscript was discovered, to which we owe the *Didache*: the *Hierosolymitanus*, written in 1056; its contents enable us to fill up the gaps in the *Alexandrinus*. With the Greek texts we can compare the early Latin, Syriac and Coptic versions.

There are numerous editions: Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers*, Part I, *St. Clement of Rome*, 2nd edn., London, 1890, 2 vols.; O. von Gebhardt and A. Harnack, *Clementis Romani Epistolæ*, Lipsiæ, 1876, 2nd edn., 1900; Funk, *Patres Apostolici*, Tübingen, 1901. The text was published once more in 1924 by Bihlmeyer; also by H. Hemmer in *Clément de Rome*, Paris, 1909. Excellent English version, with notes by W. K. Lowther Clarke, published by the S.P.C.K. in 1937. Another by Lightfoot.

Abundant bibliography in O. Bardenhewer, *Geschichte der altkirchlichen Literatur*, Vol. I, pp. 110-113; cf. Rauschen-Altaner, *Patrologie*, pp. 56 and 58. Recent studies by Harnack, *Das Schreiben der Römischen Kirche an die Korinthische aus der Zeit Domitians*, Leipzig, 1929, and by Fr. Gercke, *Die Stellung des ersten Clemensbriefes innerhalb der Entwicklung der altchristl. Gemeindeverfassung*, Leipzig, 1931.

mouths of the two illustrious bishops Clement and Ignatius the witness of the two great churches of Rome and Antioch. We could not desire a better "introduction to the early history of the Church."<sup>5</sup>

### *St. Clement and his Letter*

The first of these documents does not name its author, but presents itself as a letter from the church of Rome to that of Corinth. But this anonymity is dispelled by a very firm and very early tradition, almost contemporary with the letter itself.<sup>6</sup>

Clement, the author of the letter, was Bishop of Rome, as is stated by the majority of those who quote his letter.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, this is clear from the letter itself: only the bishop could thus speak in the name of his Church. His place in the episcopal succession at Rome is less easy to determine: the best attested tradition puts him third, after Linus and Anacletus.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> The title of Harnack's last work, a translation and commentary of the letter of Clement (see preceding note).

<sup>6</sup> "The original manuscripts and the Latin and Syriac versions put at the head of the epistle the name of St. Clement: *Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians*. In view of the character of the Alexandrine manuscript and the early date of the versions, we may infer that already in the second century and even in the first half of that century the tradition was fixed in this respect" (Hemmer, *op. cit.*, p. xxiii). About 170, Dionysius of Corinth writes (*apud* Eusebius, *Eccles. Hist.*, IV, 23): "To-day we have kept the holy day of Sunday, during which we have read your letter; we shall continue to read it always as a warning, together with the first which Clement wrote to us." Cf. on the bearing of this testimony, W. J. Ferrar, in *Theology*, Aug., 1928, p. 282; Hermas, *Vis.* ii, 4, 3: "Thou shalt write two little books and thou shalt send one to Clement and the other to Grapte; and Clement will send it round to the other cities, for it is to him that this belongs"; cf. Harnack, *op. cit.*, p. 50. Irenæus (about 180), III, 3, 3: "In the time of this Clement there were very serious divisions amongst the brethren who were at Corinth, and the Church which is in Rome wrote to the Corinthians a very strong letter exhorting them to peace, renewing their faith, and the tradition which they had recently received from the apostles." Numerous other citations are collected in Lightfoot, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 148-200, beginning with the significant comparisons of the letter of Clement with that of Polycarp (in 110), pp. 149-152.

<sup>7</sup> The citation of Dionysius of Corinth here is especially interesting: writing in 170 to Soter, Bishop of Rome, he assures him of the public reading given to his letter, as of "the first written by Clement."

<sup>8</sup> Irenæus, *Hær.*, III, 3, 3; *Hist. Eccles.*, III, 4, 9, after Hegesippus (Hemmer II). A second tradition, coming no doubt from the Clementine romances, makes him the immediate successor of Peter: Tertullian, *De præscr.*, 32 (Lightfoot, *op. cit.*, p. 174). A third puts him immediately after Linus: Liberian catalogue. This transposition doubtless arises from a confusion with Cletus (Light-



Of the man himself, his origin, and religious formation, we know only what we can gather from the reading of his letter. Eusebius and St. Jerome<sup>9</sup> have rightly stressed the close contact between the letter of Clement and the Epistle to the Hebrews; it is also related to the Book of Wisdom. It reveals a very deep Christian faith in its author, yet he is one who delights to base himself on Jewish tradition and to feed himself thereby; hence it is not without reason that Clement has been regarded as a Christian convert from Judaism.<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, as regards the surrounding paganism, he shows a sympathetic understanding of all that is noble and good; he allows and admires the heroism of the great pagans Codrus, Lycurgus, Decius and others (ch. liv). Still more does he praise the world, the work of God (ch. xx-xxii); his Christianity is not at all that of which the pagans will make a bugbear, as the religion of a *gens lucifuga*; he is a man of the widest and most truly human sympathies.<sup>11</sup>

This humanism, discreetly revealed in the letter, has been transformed and elevated by the Christian faith; the language, accustomed to prayer, takes a liturgical tone. The great prayer (LIX-

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foot, *op. cit.*, p. 170; cf. Augustine, *Epist.*, 53, 2; Lightfoot, *op. cit.*, p. 174). Attempts at harmonisation: (1) Rufinus, *Præf. in Recogn.* (Lightfoot, p. 174): Clement succeeded Peter as apostle, Linus and Cletus succeeded him as bishops. (2) *Apost. Constitut.*, VII, 46 (Lightfoot, *op. cit.*, p. 344); Linus was appointed by Paul, Clement by Peter. (3) Epiphanius, *Hær.*, XXVII, 6; Clement, with a view to peace, yielded his rank to Linus, and resumed it only after the death of Cletus, cf. *Epist.*, LIV, 2: it is better to yield one's place than to give rise to a schism. This is an ingenious comparison—doubtless too ingenious.

<sup>9</sup> *Hist. Eccles.*, III, 37-38; *De viris illustribus*, 15.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Hoennicke, *Judenchristentum*, pp. 291 *et seq.*; Lightfoot, *op. cit.*, pp. 58-60; Tillemont, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 149; Hemmer, *op. cit.*, p. xi. On the opposite side: Harnack, *op. cit.*, p. 51. The author of the letter cannot be identified with the Clement of *Phil.*, iv, 3 (cf. Lightfoot, *op. cit.*, p. 4, 52-58, and *Philippians*, p. 168).

Lightfoot, *op. cit.*, p. 60, and Harnack, p. 51, conjecture that Clement was a freedman of the imperial household; this is only a conjecture, but it is ingenious; the deputies sent by Clement would also be of Cæsar's household; Claudius Ephebus, Valerius Bito, and Fortunatus; Claudius and Nero were of the gens Claudia, and Messalina of the gens Valeria. On the death of Clement we have no certain information; the only indication in favour of a death away from Rome is the absence of any tomb, or of any indication of the burial of the saint at Rome; cf. Tillemont, *op. cit.*, pp. 159-160; Allard, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 173-180; Lightfoot, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 86 *et seq.*

<sup>11</sup> Many thoughts and turns of phrase show a Stoic influence. Bardy, *Expressions stoiciennes dans la 1<sup>re</sup> Clementis*, in *Recherches de Science Religieuse*, Vol. XIII, 1922, pp. 73-85; commentary by Knopf, ch. xix, xx, xxviii, xxxiii; cf. *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, p. 254.

LXI) is one of the most revealing documents for early liturgy; we hear therein the voice of a bishop who, at the close of the exhortation he has just addressed to the community at Corinth, turns towards God, as he is accustomed to do at the end of his homilies, and invites his Christian hearers to pray and praise together with him.<sup>12</sup>

It is indeed a homily that we have in this document. Clement knows that it will be read at Corinth in his name in the assembly of the brethren, and he addresses these absent Christians, as he would address his own in Rome, exhorting them, rebuking them, but also persuading them to pray to God with him.

This exhortation already displays the characteristics the Roman Church's documents will always have: a wise and paternal gravity, a conscious responsibility; a firm insistence but at the same time mildness in reproaches, and in the exposition of doctrine, care to preserve in its integrity the heritage of the traditional deposit.<sup>13</sup>

### *The Roman Primacy*

The date and occasion of the letter are fixed definitely by the document itself: a discord had broken out within the church of Corinth, and had resulted in the deposition of the presbyters (ch. xlvii); these facts had come to the knowledge of the Church of Rome, which had decided to intervene; it had nevertheless delayed to do so, because of the persecution to which it had been subjected (ch. i.) "The letter must have been written during a pause in the persecution, or immediately after its end, in the last days of Domitian or the beginning of the reign of Nerva, i.e. in 95 or 96."<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> This great prayer does not stand alone in Clement's letter; we find therein, especially in ch. xx and xxxiii other portions of a very marked liturgical character; and we find a very manifest echo of it in the formulas of prayer in the *Apostolic Constitutions*. Cf. *Hist. du Dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, p. 251.

<sup>13</sup> This faithfulness in transmitting the deposit received from the apostles is recognised already by St. Irenæus (III, 3, 3) as one of the characteristics of this "very strong letter." Lightfoot (*op. cit.*, pp. 396-397) has repeated and confirmed this praise: "It was the special privilege of the early Roman Church that it had felt the personal influence of both the leading Apostles, St. Paul and St. Peter—who approached Christianity from opposite sides—the Apostle of the Gentiles and the Apostle of the Circumcision. Comprehensiveness therefore was its heritage. . . . Comprehensiveness was especially impersonated in Clement, its earliest and chief representative." This "comprehensiveness" does not wholly efface the personal character of this letter, and Harnack is mistaken (*op. cit.*, p. 50) in regarding this view of Lightfoot as failing to recognise the personal merits of Clement.

<sup>14</sup> Knopf, *op. cit.*, p. 43. This conclusion is generally accepted.

Was the intervention of the Church of Rome spontaneous, or had it been requested by the Corinthians? We cannot say;<sup>15</sup> what is certain is that Rome was conscious of its authority, and the responsibility which this involved; Corinth also recognised it and bowed to it.<sup>16</sup> Batiffol has described this intervention as "the Epiphany of the Roman Primacy,"<sup>17</sup> and he is right.<sup>18</sup>

### *The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*

This is not the only lesson that may be learnt from this document: we find in it also a strong affirmation of the ecclesiastical constitution of the Church:

"The Master commanded us to perform the offerings and the divine service not haphazardly or without order, but at fixed times and hours. He himself determined where and by what ministers

<sup>15</sup> Batiffol, *L'Eglise naissante*, p. 154: "Had the Roman Church been asked by Corinth to intervene? The epistle does not say so; if the presbyters deposed by the sedition of the Corinthians had had recourse to Rome, it was perhaps better for Clement not to say so. In this hypothesis we should have here a noteworthy appeal to Rome, the very first in the history of the Church. But it is also possible that Rome derived its knowledge of the scandal at Corinth by public report, and that its intervention was spontaneous (XLVII, 7). In this hypothesis we should understand better that the intestine revolution at Corinth was most unusual, but also that Rome already felt itself in possession of that superior and exceptional authority which it never ceased to claim subsequently, and which was religiously obeyed at Corinth on the occasion of this first intervention." We may remark that the apostle John was still alive; it was not John, however, who intervened at Corinth, but the Bishop of Rome.

<sup>16</sup> This is clear from the letter of Dionysius of Corinth, quoted above, p. 410, n. 6.

<sup>17</sup> Batiffol, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

<sup>18</sup> In an article published since the above was written, *L'intervention de l'Eglise de Rome à Corinthe vers l'an 96*, in *Revue d'Histoire ecclésiastique*, Vol. XXXI, 1935, pp. 267 *et seq.*, Père R. Van Cauwelært has recently called again into question the value of the letter of Clement as a support for the Roman primacy. He explains the Roman intervention at Corinth by the very special relations which existed between the two cities arising from the fact that Corinth was a Roman colony. But there is no proof that these relations involved a specially close intimacy between the two churches. Civic relations were essentially relations between Latins, as Père R. Van Cauwelært himself expressly recognises. But the early Christian community in Rome was more than half Greek: Greek remained its official language until nearly 200, and the Letter of Clement is in Greek. Had it been in Latin, this point might have favoured the new thesis. Cf. J. Zeiller, *A propos de l'intervention de l'église de Rome à Corinthe*, in *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique*, *ibid.*, pp. 762 *et seq.* Père Van Cauwelært nevertheless upholds his point of view (*Réponse aux remarques de M. J. Zeiller*, in *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique*, *ibid.*, pp. 765 *et seq.*).

these ought to be carried out . . . . To the high priest, special functions have been entrusted; to priests their own places have been assigned; the Levites have their own duties; layfolk are bound by precepts peculiar to layfolk" (XL).

In these Biblical recollections, it is the ecclesiastical hierarchy that Clement has in view.<sup>19</sup> The origin of this hierarchy, and in particular of the powers of government, is more clearly set forth in chapters XLII and XLIV:

"The apostles were sent to us as messengers of good news by the Lord Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ was sent by God. Christ, then, comes from God, and the apostles from Christ; these two missions come harmoniously from God's will. Having received the instructions of our Lord Jesus Christ, and being fully convinced by his Resurrection, the Apostles, strengthened by the word of God, went forth, with the assurance of the Holy Spirit, to announce the good news of the coming of the Kingdom of God. Preaching therefore through country and cities, and having tested their firstfruits by the Holy Spirit, they appointed these as bishops and deacons of the future believers." (XLII).

"Our Apostles knew by Our Lord Jesus Christ that there would be strife concerning the episcopal office. For this reason, in their perfect foreknowledge, they instituted those of whom we have spoken, and then laid down the rule that after their death, other approved men should succeed to their ministry. Those who have been thus instituted by the apostles, or later on by other eminent men, with the approbation of the whole Church, and who have served blamelessly the flock of Christ with humility, tranquillity and charity, and who have had good testimony borne to them for a long time—such men, we consider, cannot justly be deposed from their ministry" (XLIV).

Already we see here how deeply rooted is the assurance of the succession which links the whole ecclesiastical hierarchy through the apostles to Christ, and through Christ to God; here we have the foundation for the traditional thesis set forth by Irenæus and Tertullian: "Quod ecclesiæ ab apostolis, apostoli a Christo, Christus a Deo accepit."<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup>Batiffol, *op. cit.*, p. 152. "It is controverted whether the high priest here figures the bishop, or Christ: it is clear, at any rate, that the priests stand for the presbyters, and the levites for the deacons. In any case, Christian services belong to a hierarchy distinct from the laity: there are clerics, and layfolk."

<sup>20</sup>*De præser*, XXI, 4. In his History of the Papacy (*Geschichte des Papstums*, Tübingen, 1930, Vol. I, pp. 10 *et seq.*), Caspar recognises an apostolical succession here, but tries to make it a purely spiritual succession such as that which links up the teachers in a philosophical school to its founders. But this is to mis-

These two prominent features of the ecclesiastical constitution, the Roman primacy and the divine origin of the hierarchy, are not demonstrated here as theses which opponents deny and which have to be proved; they are truths generally admitted by Christians; Clement can bring them forward with full assurance against the seditious persons at Corinth.

### *The Christian Faith and the Christian Life*

The aim of the letter, the summoning back of the divided and rebellious Christians to concord and obedience, had led Clement to bring out into full light the constitution of the Church. It was desirable that we should first of all stress the great importance of his teaching here, but it must not lead us to overlook all that surrounds this central thesis, for in a hortatory<sup>21</sup> form we have a picture of the Christian life and Christian faith which is of the greatest value to the historian. The Church is seen to be directed towards an ideal of peace, submission to God and to earthly rulers, and of fraternal concord, which even persecution does not disturb. The duty of obedience and union is recalled without weakness, but the strongest counsels or precepts are set forth in a benevolent, peaceable and truly paternal tone; the praise with which the letter begins is not a mere *captatio benevolentiae* but is above all the sincere expression of esteem and affection for the Church of Corinth. There is only one severe feature: the advice given to the authors of the sedition to leave Corinth; even this is presented not as a condemnation inflicted upon them, but as an act of charity asked from them:

"Is there among you some one who is noble, compassionate, and filled with charity? Let him say: 'If I am the cause of the sedition, I will leave, and go wherever you wish. I will carry out the decisions of the people, only let the flock of Christ live in peace with the appointed presbyters!' He who will act thus will gain for himself great glory in Christ, and every place will welcome him. . . ." (LIV).

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take the character of the Christian Church, which is not a philosophical school, but the Body of Christ, a visible society, governed by hierarchical heads.

<sup>21</sup> It is difficult to summarise this letter; but here are the chief developments: I-III, prologue; IV-XXXVI, moral considerations in order to prepare for the return to peace; XXXVII-XXXVIII, transition: the Body of Christ; XXXIX-LXI, teaching directly aiming at remedying the division amongst the Corinthians; LXII-LXV, conclusion.

Then, in order to give encouragement, Clement mentions examples of devotion given by pagans and Jews, and in these examples again we note with Hemmer the "breath of humanity which inspires Clement, and leads him to do justice to the devotion of Codros, Lycurgus, Decius, and other pagan heroes."

Not men alone, but also inanimate creatures teach us peace, concord, and harmony (ch. XX-XXI).

Still, it is true that the usual sphere of Clement's thought is sacred history; it is there he seeks by preference for his models and also for examples of God's punishments, as we see from the beginning (ch. IV) and throughout the epistle. These recollections of the Old Testament are moreover a common possession, and doubtless Clement utilises many developments which are already traditional.

What is more personal are the properly Christian features; these are not so numerous, but they are set forth very prominently. This is the case with the example of the excellent apostles Peter and Paul (ch. V) and of the Roman martyrs (ch. VI); and above all with the examples and lessons of Christ himself:

"Let us fix our gaze on the blood of Christ, and know how precious it is to God his Father, because having been poured out of our salvation, it has brought to the whole world the grace of repentance" (VII, 4).

"Above all let us remember the words which the Lord Jesus spoke to us to teach us fairness: . . . 'Be ye merciful, that ye may obtain mercy. . . .'" (XIII, 1).

"Christ belongs to those who are humble, and not to those who exalt themselves above the flock. The sceptre of the majesty of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, did not come with the pomp of pride or boastfulness, though He might have done, but in humility, as the Holy Spirit spake concerning him" (XVI, 1-2).

"The sovereign Creator and Master of the universe willed that all these things should remain in peace and concord, for He is good towards all, but especially towards us who have recourse to his mercy through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom be glory and majesty for ever and ever, Amen" (XX, 11-12).

"Such is the way, my beloved, in which we find our salvation, Jesus Christ, the high priest of our offerings, the protector and help of our weakness. Through him we fix our gaze on the heights of heaven; through him we see as in a mirror the spotless and sublime countenance of God; through him the eyes of our heart are opened; through him our mind, hitherto closed and darkened, opens to the light; through

him the Master has willed that we should taste the immortal knowledge, who, being the effulgence of God's majesty, is so much higher than the angels as he hath received a more excellent name. . . ." (XXXVI, 1-2).

We recognise in the last sentence an echo of the epistle to the Hebrews: Christ is our high priest, the mirror in which we contemplate the splendour of God; He is infinitely above the angels, and this transcendence is then proved by Clement by the Biblical texts already quoted in the Epistle to the Hebrews.<sup>22</sup>

A little further, we have a eulogy of charity which recalls the teaching of St. Paul (*I Cor.*, xiii), and which concludes in the contemplation of the charity of Jesus Christ:

"Let him who has the charity of Christ fulfil the commandments of Christ. Who can describe the bond of the divine charity? Who is able to express its sublime beauty? The height to which charity raises us is ineffable. Charity unites us closely to God; charity covers a multitude of sins, charity suffers all things, bears all things; there is nothing low in charity, nothing proud; charity does not make a schism, charity does not create sedition, charity does all things in concord; in charity the perfection of all the elect of God is consummated; without charity nothing is pleasing to God. By charity the Master has raised us up to Him; because of the charity He had for us, Jesus Christ our Lord, by the will of God, gave His blood for us, and His flesh for our flesh, and His soul for our souls" (XLIX).

This is indeed a Christian sermon.<sup>23</sup> Doubtless the thought of Christ is not so constantly present to the mind of Clement as it was to Paul, but when He does appear He dominates everything: He is the "sceptre of the majesty of God" and the radiation of His glory; to mankind He is the Redeemer and Saviour. This exalted Christology will be more concealed in the apologists: desirous above all to demonstrate to catechumens or even to pagans the preliminaries of the faith, they will postpone the great theological theses to a later teaching; but the witness of the apostolic Fathers, and in particular of Clement and Ignatius, warns the historian not to think

<sup>22</sup> On all this cf. *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, p. 270.

<sup>23</sup> Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, 1921, p. 291, is mistaken in seeing in the primitive Roman Church as it appears in Clement, the religion of the Jewish Dispersion. So also Lietzmann, *Geschichte der alten Kirche*, Vol. I, p. 209: "This community did not spring from Paulinism, but received from it only a very superficial impress. It developed directly out of the Greek synagogue, and it sets forth a conception of Christianity such as we should expect to find amongst the proselytes." Against this, cf. *Hist. du Dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, p. 280.

that silence comes from forgetfulness, or that the second Christian century, before Irenæus, lost sight of the theology of the apostles.

The dogma of the Trinity is equally attested in this letter. We note particularly this solemn declaration in which Clement confirms his moral teaching:

"Accept our counsel, and you will not regret doing so. For as truly as God lives, and the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, the faith and hope of the elect, he who humbly carries out . . . the commandments given by God, will be included and counted among the number of those saved by Jesus Christ. . . ." (LVIII, 2).<sup>24</sup>

The Jews swore by the life of Jahveh; Clement swears by the life of the three divine Persons, in whom he sees "the faith and hope of the elect"; we feel here the energy of the Christian soul which, pressed by grace, professes by faith the Trinity of divine Persons, and by hope tends towards them; it is the same energy that we shall find at the end of the second century in Athenagoras; "We are moved by the sole desire to know the true God and His Word . . ., to know the community between Father and Son, and the union and distinction of these united terms, the Spirit, the Son, and the Father."<sup>25</sup>

Two other texts<sup>26</sup> also remind the Christians of their Trinitarian faith. As Harnack puts it: "The author sets forth the profession of the Trinitarian faith; he does not comment on it, evidently because he felt no difficulty in this formula, any more than St. Paul had done."<sup>27</sup> And certainly there is no indication of any hesitation here in Clement or the Corinthians. They believe in God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit; they aspire to know Him; this is the faith and hope of the elect.

The Christian life which these texts reveal to us expands into

<sup>24</sup> This important text was already quoted by St. Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto*, XXIX, 72 (Migne, P.G., XXIX, p. 201). As this chapter and the following ones are lacking in the *Alexandrinus*, the authenticity of this text was long questioned, but the discovery of the Jerusalem M.S. and the Syriac version has removed all doubts. Cf. on the doctrinal importance of this text, *Hist. du Dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 277-279.

<sup>25</sup> *Legatio*, c. XII.

<sup>26</sup> "The apostles, fully convinced by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and strengthened by the word of God, with the assurance of the Holy Spirit" (XLII, 3); "Have we not one only God, and one only Christ, and one only Spirit (of Grace) poured out upon us, and is there not one only calling in Christ?" (XLVI, 6).

<sup>27</sup> *Der Erste Klemensbrief*, in *Sitzungsberichte der kon. Preuss. Akad.*, 1909, III, p. 51, n. 4.



the great prayer (ch. LIX-LXI); we shall study this later on, when we deal with prayer and the liturgy.

## § 2. ST. IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH<sup>1</sup>

Of all the witnesses of the Christian Church at the beginning of the second century, there is none more qualified than the illustrious Bishop and martyr, St. Ignatius of Antioch; and no testimony is more explicit than his. For a long time this testimony was suspect; Renan could still write: "The question of the epistles of St. Ignatius is, after that of the Johannine writings, the most difficult of those connected with primitive Christian literature,"<sup>2</sup> and he answered the question negatively.<sup>3</sup> But thanks above all to the work of Lightfoot, the critical problem has been studied more closely, and definitively settled, and this has assured definite progress in the early history of the Church.<sup>4</sup>

The confusion which so long paralysed the efforts of critics arose in great part from the state of the manuscript tradition.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Editions: Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, Part II, 3 vols., 1889; Gebhardt-Harnack, Funk-Bihlmeyer (*supra*, p. 409, n. 4); Lelong (1910); Bauer (1920). English translation by Dr. Srawley, published by S.P.C.K., 1919. Historical and theological studies: T. Zahn, *Ignatius von Antiochien*, Gotha, 1873; E. von der Goltz, *Ignatius von Antiochen als Christ und Theologe*, Leipzig, 1894; H. de Genouillac, *Le Christianisme en Asie-Mineure au début du II<sup>e</sup> siècle*, 1907; Rackl, *Die Christologie des hl. Ignatius v. Antiochien*, Freiburg, 1914; Lebreton, *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 282-331.

<sup>2</sup> *Les Evangiles*, p. x.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xvii; cf. p. 492.

<sup>4</sup> In one of his last works, Loofs wrote: "There was a period of new biblical, theological and historical researches in which one seemed to be retrograde if one did not set out to interpret in the light of Philo and the literature deriving from him, all the references to the Logos met with in the christological texts of early Christian literature. That has changed now that the authenticity of the letters of Ignatius has been definitively established" (*Paulus von Samosata*, Leipzig, 1924, p. 312).

<sup>5</sup> The manuscript tradition presents three different forms:

The *short* recension, containing three letters, Polycarp, Ephesians and Romans, in a very abridged form.

The *mean, mixed* or *long* recension, containing in a longer form the three letters mentioned above, and in addition, Magnesians, Trallians, Philadelphians, and Smyrnians.

The *long* or *longer* recension contained in a still longer form the seven preceding letters, and in addition: Mary of Cassobola to Ignatius, Ignatius to Mary of Cassobola, Ignatius to the Tarsians, to the Antiochenes, to Hero, and to the Philippians.

But it is evident that the decisive reason for this opposition lay in the desire to defend a theological thesis threatened by these documents.<sup>6</sup>

### *St. Ignatius and his Letters*

The circumstances in which these letters were written are very clearly determined: in the course of a persecution of which we know nothing otherwise, and which speedily died down,<sup>7</sup> Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, was arrested; he was taken to Rome to be condemned to wild beasts. He made a first stop at Philadelphia,<sup>8</sup> a second at Smyrna, where he was received by Polycarp, the bishop, and met also by representatives of the churches of Ephesus, Magnesia and Tralles. When he was there he wrote to these three churches and to the church of Rome. Next he was taken on to Troas, from whence he wrote to the churches of Philadelphia and Smyrna, and also to Polycarp. He passed by Philippi on the way to Dyrrachium, and lastly reached Rome. At his request, the

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This last form, obviously interpolated, was the first to be published, in 1498, by Lefèvre d'Étaples; the mean form, the only authentic one, in 1644 by Ussher; the short form in 1845 by Cureton.

To Lightfoot (in 1885 and 1889) belongs the merit of having elucidated the critical problem and bringing forward the decisive testimonies which established the authenticity of the seven letters (*op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 135-232). O. Pfleiderer, in the first edition of his *Urchristentum*, 1887, pp. 825-835, had declared the letters of Ignatius to be "as certainly unauthentic as the pastoral epistles"; in his second edition (1902), pp. 226-232, he recognises them as authentic. Lightfoot (*op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 423) thus concludes his study of the question: "While external and internal evidence combine to assert the genuineness of these writings, no satisfactory account has been or apparently can be given of them as a forgery of a later date than Ignatius."

There is another grouping of the epistles, adopted by T. W. Manson in *A Companion to the Bible* (Edinburgh, 1939, p. 127): 'The Long Recension' (13 epistles), the *Short* (the genuine 7), and the *Syriac* (3 only).

<sup>6</sup> J. Reville admitted this in his *Origines de l'Épiscopat*: "The real reason, and the only really strong one, which from the beginning of modern historical criticism to our own day, has caused the disqualification of the epistles of Ignatius in their first recension is the ardent episcopalianism which inspires them from one end to the other" (p. 478). He himself accepts the authenticity but rejects the testimony: "To take literally the information furnished by the epistles on the ecclesiastical state of their time is about as reasonable as to represent the state of our modern society from the violent diatribes against the Republic of Freemasons by a militant clerical, or against the *bourgeois* by a revolutionary socialist" (p. 480). The clerical would at least know what was going on in his Church, and the Socialist in his party: that is all we ask from Ignatius.

<sup>7</sup> Ignatius to Polycarp, VII, 1.

<sup>8</sup> *Philad.*, III, 1; VII, 1; VIII, 1.

Christians of Philippi wrote to Antioch to congratulate the Christians there on the return of peace; they sent their letter to Polycarp, who replied to them, and at the same time sent them at their request the letters of Ignatius which he possessed; in this way there was constituted the first *Corpus Ignatianum*.<sup>9</sup>

These letters, which are about fifteen years later than that of Clement,<sup>10</sup> are like that, and even more so, occasional papers; they were not written after long preparation, but in haste, by a prisoner condemned to wild beasts and closely guarded: "chained to ten leopards, that is, ten soldiers who show themselves to be the more wicked as one does them more good" (*Rom.* v, 1) We must not expect to find in them an elaborate exposition of the Christian doctrine, nor a complete description of ecclesiastical organisation, but we shall find there a most sincere and clear testimony concerning the Christian life and faith, that of a martyr who is already suffering for Christ, and desires only to die for him, who dearly loves the Church, and who warns it with the farsightedness of a man inspired by God, and with the authority of a bishop.

### *The Church and the Churches*

We find many common features between these letters and that of Clement: there is the same desire for order and peace in the Church by submission to the hierarchy, and the same love of unity. But there is also a great difference between the two bishops: Clement does not confine himself to exhorting: he gives authoritative

<sup>9</sup> Harnack recalls these facts in his studies on early collections of letters: *Die Briefsammlung des Apostels Paulus und die anderen vorkonstantinischen Christlichen Briefsammlungen*, Leipzig, 1926, pp. 28-35. Polycarp to the Philippian, 13: "You and Ignatius have written asking that if anyone is going to Syria he may also take your letter. . . . The letters of Ignatius, both those he has addressed to us and the others which we possess, are being sent to you at your request; they are included with this letter. . . . If you on your side have certain news of Ignatius and his companions, please communicate it to me." This text is quoted by Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.*, III, 14-15. On this letter of Polycarp we have also the testimony of Irenæus (III, 3, 4), and of Eusebius (*Hist. Eccles.*, IV, 14, 8). Now Irenæus was a disciple of Polycarp, as he reminds Florinus (*Hist. Eccles.*, V, 20). The letter of Ignatius to the Romans is quoted by Irenæus (V, 28, 4) without mention of the author's name, and also by Origen (*De Orat.*, 20, *In Canticum*, Prol.). In *Hom. VI in Luc.*, Origen quotes *Ephes.*, XIX. These two last citations are expressly attributed to Ignatius. The seven letters are enumerated by Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.*, III, 36, 2.

<sup>10</sup> The date of these letters is that of Ignatius's martyrdom; this date belongs to the reign of Trajan (98-117), but it is difficult to be more precise. Cf. Lightfoot, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 472.

advice which is to be followed. Ignatius's attitude is not the same: in spite of the prestige of his situation as a confessor, he adopts always a great reserve so far as he himself is concerned. Thus he writes to the Trallians (III, 3): "In my love for you, I refrain from more severe remarks which I might address to you concerning your bishop; I will not presume to command you like an apostle, being only a condemned man." Even these counsels, which he multiplies to other churches, disappear from the letter to the Romans; here we find only prayers, supplications, and veneration for the Roman Church. We may infer from this that in the mind of Ignatius, the various churches are mutually independent, and that a bishop, even of Antioch, and a confessor of the faith, can give only counsel to other churches, while the Roman Church alone has a rank apart, an authority which is over all the others, which justified the step taken by Clement, and calls for submission and deference from Ignatius.

If we pass from the churches as a whole to the local organisation of each church, we find everywhere a definitely constituted hierarchy. Ignatius requests that it shall be respected; he does not need to promote its establishment: it already exists.

A few texts, chosen from a great number, will give the sense and force of the directions of Ignatius:

"The youthfulness of your bishop ought not to lead you to treat him with too much familiarity, in him you must reverence the very power of God the Father. In this way act, as I know, your holy presbyters; they do not presume upon his youth, but being inspired by the wisdom of God, they are subject to him, or rather it is not to him they are subject, but to the Father of Jesus Christ, to the universal bishop" (*Magn.*, III, 1).

"All must reverence the deacons as Jesus Christ, the bishop as the image of the Father, the presbyters as the Council of God and the college of the apostles. Without them there is no church" (*Trall.*, III, 1).<sup>11</sup>

We learn from Clement and the *Didache* that the episcopate is not only a ruling authority but also a priesthood;<sup>12</sup> it has the same character in Ignatius; hence the indispensable place of the bishop in the administration of the sacraments:

<sup>11</sup> Cf. *Ephes.*, IV, 1; VI, 1; *Philad.*, III, 1; *Smyrn.*, VIII, 1; *Polyc.*, VI, 1.

<sup>12</sup> *Clement.*, XLIV, 4; *Didache*, XV.

"Do nothing without the bishop in what concerns the Church. Regard as valid only that Eucharist which is celebrated under the presidency of the bishop or of his delegate. Wherever the bishop is, there let also the community be, just as wherever Christ Jesus is, there is the Catholic Church. It is not permitted to baptize or to celebrate the agape apart from the bishop; but all that he approves is pleasing to God, and all that you do is secure and valid" (*Smyrn.*, VIII, 1-2).<sup>13</sup>

### *Authority and the Charisms*

Lastly, we note the no less important fact of the union between the charisms and the hierarchy. Ignatius, the bishop who everywhere preaches obedience, is at the same time the enthusiastic confessor, full of desire for martyrdom; he is also a seer, whose vision has penetrated the heavens: "Though I am a prisoner of Jesus Christ, I am able to know heavenly things, and the hierarchy of angels, and the ranks of principalities, and things visible and invisible, but I am not thereby a true disciple" (*Trall.*, V, 2).<sup>14</sup>

At the end of his book on the idea of the apostolate, the Protestant historian H. Monnier wrote: "There came to pass this strange thing: the Spirit, in the second century, went over to the side of the bishops, deserting the cause of those inspired by profession. Ignatius and Polycarp, the known founders of the monarchical episcopate in Asia, are full of the fire of the Spirit: they prophesy, and have visions, while the free missionaries of their time are doubtful personages, whose vocation derives from their own caprice. And in the rest of this struggle between growing Catholicism and

<sup>13</sup> Cf. *Philad.*, IV. Amongst all the churches made known to us in these documents, there is one where the monarchical episcopate does not appear, namely, that of Philippi. Cf. Michiels, p. 367: "There is (in the letter of Polycarp) no mention of a bishop, but there is of priests and deacons. It seems to us that certain reasons compel us to infer from this silence the non-existence of a bishop at Philippi. No other satisfactory explanation has been advanced." Cf. H. de Genouillac, *op. cit.*, p. 143; Duchesne, *Histoire ancienne de l'Eglise*, Vol. I, pp. 88 *et seq.*

<sup>14</sup> Cf. *Philad.*, VII, 2: "They suspected that I spoke thus because I knew already of the schism which was to break out; but I take to witness him for whom I bear these bonds, that I had learnt nought from man. It was the Spirit which said aloud: 'Do nothing without the bishop. . . .'" *Polyc.* II, 2: "If you are both flesh and spirit, you ought to treat gently the things that come before you; as for things invisible, pray that they may be revealed to you, so that you may lack nothing, but possess the spiritual gifts in abundance." Cf. *ibid.*, I, 3: "Devote yourself to constant prayers, ask to grow in understanding, watch, and let your spirit never sleep."

free Inspiration it is evident to us that Catholicism represents the true interests of the Church. . . . Free Inspiration had created the Church, but at this moment it was becoming a danger; it had either to discipline itself or disappear. That is why the best among the Spirituals put their gifts at the service of the Church, and ended by being absorbed into its hierarchy.”<sup>15</sup> The study of the apostolic times, and in particular of St. Paul, has shown what we are to think of this supposed sovereignty of Inspiration at the beginning of the Church; but it is interesting to note that at the period to which we have come, namely, the early years of the second century, the Catholic organisation of the Church is evident even to observers the least predisposed in its favour.

Ignatius found already some opponents who wished to refer only to Scripture: “I have heard some people saying: ‘If I do not find (this point of belief) in the records, in the Gospel, I will not believe it!’ And when I say to them: ‘It is written,’ they reply to me: ‘That is precisely the question.’ For me, the records are Jesus Christ, the inviolable records are his Cross, his death, his resurrection, and the faith which is by Him; it is by these things that I desire, thanks to your prayer, to be justified” (*Philad.*, VIII).<sup>16</sup>

This Church is not a friendly group of scattered communities with no bond between them: it is truly a unity created by Jesus Christ: “Where the bishop is, there ought also to be the people, just as where Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church”<sup>17</sup> (*Smyrn.*, VIII, 2). “Jesus Christ is the Mind of the Father, just as the bishops established in the confines (of the world) are the Mind of Jesus Christ” (*Ephes.*, III, 2).

### *The Roman Primacy*

Moreover, this unity rests upon the special dignity of the Roman Church; in this matter the witness of Ignatius is of great weight.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup> *La notion de l'apostolat des origines à Irénée*, 1903, p. 374. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 245.

<sup>16</sup> Batiffol, *l'Eglise naissante*, pp. 162 et seq.; on the following text, *ibid.*, p. 166.

<sup>17</sup> This is the first occurrence of this expression; it signifies the “universal Church” in contrast to particular churches; so in *Mart. Pol.*, *inser.* VIII, 1; XIX, 2. Very soon it will signify the Great Church in contrast to the heretics; thus *Muratorian Canon*, 66, 69 (ed. Lietzmann); Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.*, VII, 106, 107; cf. *Mart. Pol.*, XV<sup>2</sup> (doubtful text). Cf. note by Bauer on *Smyrn.*, VIII, 2.

<sup>18</sup> It has often been studied: Funk, *Der Primat der römischen Kirche nach Ignatius und Irenæus*, in *Kirchengeschichtliche Abhandlungen*, Paderborn, 1897,

It is evident in the first place in the initial address of the letter, which is of a solemnity and high tone which distinguishes it from all the others:

"Ignatius, also called Theophorus, to the Church which has obtained mercy in the bounteous power of the Father most High and Jesus Christ his only son, to the Church which is beloved and illuminated by the will of Him who willed everything that exists, according to the love of Jesus Christ our God, to that Church which presides in the region of the Romans, worthy of God, worthy of honour, worthy of blessing, worthy of praise, worthy to be heard, worthy in purity, presiding in love, which has received the law of Christ, which bears the name of the Father, and which I salute in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, to those who are attached in body and soul to all His commandments, filled for ever with the grace of God, and purified from every foreign dye, I wish a full and holy joy in Jesus Christ our God."

The impression we get from the reading of this address is confirmed by the letter as a whole: all the other epistles are full of recommendations and counsels; we find none such here, but only respectful requests; this complete change of attitude can only be explained by the singular veneration which the bishop of Antioch has for the Roman Church. Lastly, we must quote: "You have never envied anyone; you have given instructions to others. What I desire is that what you counsel and ordain may be always practised" (*Rom.*, III, 1); and still more this final recommendation: "Remember in your prayers the church of Syria which, having me no longer, has only God as its pastor. It will have no other bishop besides Jesus Christ and your charity" (*Rom.*, IX, 1). We will not exaggerate the importance of these words, but we must remark that Ignatius addresses them only to the Romans: from the other churches he asks only prayers.<sup>19</sup>

After re-reading these texts, we can without imprudence sub-

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Vol. 1, pp. 2-12; Chapman, *Saint Ignace d'Antioche et l'Eglise romaine*, in *Revue bénédictine*, Vol. XIII, 1896, pp. 385-400; Batiffol, *Eglise naissante*, pp. 167-170; H. Scott, *The Eastern Churches and the Papacy*, London, 1928, pp. 25-34. Interpreted differently by Harnack, *Das Zeugnis des Ignatius über das Ansehen der römischen Gemeinde*, in *Sitzungsber. der Akademie*, Berlin, 1896, pp. 111-131; H. Koch, *Cathedra Petri*, Giessen, 1930, p. 175; E. Caspar, *Geschichte des Papstums*, Vol. 1, Tübingen, 1930, pp. 16-17.

<sup>19</sup> On all these texts we can accept the commentaries of Duchesne, *Eglises séparées*, pp. 127-129, recalled by Batiffol, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

scribe to this conclusion of an Anglican writer, S. H. Scott: "The Roman Church had a primacy, and that primacy was owing to its connection with St. Peter."<sup>20</sup>

Circumstances had led St. Ignatius to multiply his recommendations of unity between Christians, and of submission to the hierarchy, and thus no testimony is more explicit than his, or more valuable to us concerning the life and organisation of the Church at the beginning of the second century. But as we have already seen, this great bishop was at the same time a spiritual man and a prophet. As he himself recommends to St. Polycarp (*Polyc.*, II, 2), if he is flesh as well as spirit, this is in order to govern with gentleness those amongst whom he lives, while also contemplating invisible things. This contemplation is for him both a much desired grace and an imperious need. His whole theology is illuminated by it.

### *The Flesh of Christ*

This theology naturally has traces of the controversies which then loomed large. In Asia as a whole, and above all in the churches of Tralles and Smyrna, Ignatius felt the menace of Gnosticism, and reacted against it with all his might. Deceived by their dreams, these people had gone so far as to deny the real life and real flesh of Jesus Christ; the Bishop of Antioch, like his master St. John,<sup>21</sup> sees in these denials the complete opposite of Christianity:<sup>22</sup>

"Refuse to listen to the speech of those who do not speak to you of Jesus Christ the descendant of David and the Son of Mary, who was really born, who really ate and drank, who really suffered persecution under Pontius Pilate, who was really crucified and died before the eyes of heaven, earth, and the lower regions; who really rose from the dead. . . . If He suffered only in appearance, as is said by certain atheists, that is, certain unbelievers, who themselves are only an appearance, why am I in bonds? Why am I impatient to fight against the wild beasts? Then I die in vain, and what I say of the Lord is a lie!" (*Trall.*, IX).

"He really suffered, just as He really rose again, although some unbelievers, who are themselves only an appearance, say that He suffered only in appearance. . . . As for me, I know and believe that, even after his resurrection, He had a body. . . . After His resurrection, He ate and

<sup>20</sup> *The Eastern Churches and the Papacy*, p. 34.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. I, pp. 482-485.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 80-81.



drank with His disciples like a corporeal being, although by the spirit He was united to His Father. . . . If it was only in appearance that Our Lord did all that, it is only in appearance that I am in bonds. Then why am I surrendered and given over to death by fire, sword and wild beasts?" (*Smyrn.*, II).

### *The Eucharist*

These Christological errors had their immediate effect on the doctrine of the Eucharist, and Ignatius follows the controversy into this domain:

"They abstain from the Eucharist and from prayer, because they do not admit that the Eucharist is the flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, which flesh suffered for our sins, and which the Father in His goodness raised up again. So those who deny the gift of God find death in their disputations. It were better for them rather to love, in order to rise again" (*Smyrn.*, VI).

In St. Ignatius as in St. John, these uncompromising affirmations of the reality of the flesh of Christ, in His life here below as also in the Eucharist, are penetrated with a belief in the vivifying activity of this flesh:

". . . You all break one bread, which is the medicine of immortality, an antidote which preserves us from death, and assures us of life for ever in Jesus Christ" (*Ephes.*, XX, 2).

### *Life in Christ*

This belief unceasingly affirmed by Ignatius<sup>23</sup> is the deep source of his own life: if he repels Docetism with such energy, it is because the real flesh of Christ, denied by this heresy, is the indispensable principle of life: "Without him we do not possess true life" (*Trall.*, IX, 2): "The only thing necessary is to be found in Christ Jesus, for eternal life" (*Ephes.*, XI, 1).

Once more we find in the theology of Ignatius, as in that of Paul

<sup>23</sup> *Ephes.*, III, 2: "Jesus Christ, our inseparable life"; VII, 2: "in death, true life"; *Magn.*, I, 2: "I desire for the churches union with the flesh and spirit of Jesus Christ, our eternal life"; *Trall.*, IX, 2: "We who believe in him will be raised up by the Father in Christ Jesus, without whom we do not possess true life"; *Smyrn.*, IV, 1: "Jesus Christ, our true life." Cf. *Ephes.*, XI, 1; XIX, 3; *Magn.*, V, 2; IX, 2; *Trall.*, II, 1, etc.

and John, and indeed in all Christianity, the indissoluble union of flesh and spirit: this defender of the hierarchy is, as we have said, a spiritual man; similarly, this defender of orthodoxy is also the great mystic who writes to the Romans (III, 3): "Nothing that is visible is beautiful. Even our God Jesus Christ is manifested better now that He has returned to the bosom of the Father." And there is in him a desire, deep as life itself, to disappear and to hide in the divine silence where God alone is heard; then he will be a "word of God," but as long as he lives in the flesh he is but a "voice" (*Rom.*, II, 1); or as he says further on: "It is when I shall have disappeared from this world that I shall be able to be called truly faithful" (III, 2). The dreadful death in store for him attracted him irresistibly: "Let me become the food of the beasts; by them I shall attain to God. I am the bread of God, I must be ground by the death of the beasts in order to become the stainless bread of Christ. . . . Then shall I be truly a disciple of Jesus Christ, when the world sees no longer my body. Entreat Christ for me, that by the beasts I may become a victim offered to God" (*Rom.*, IV, 1-2).

### *Christ and Martyrdom*

In this impatient thirst for death, silence, and complete disappearance, we must not suspect the influence of the perverse mysticism spread everywhere by Gnosticism: God is not for Ignatius an abyss in which he is to lose himself, He is the Father who is calling him in Christ and who is waiting for him; his faith is radiant with light: this Christ, whose real human nature he defends with such vigour, is He who takes hold of him by his life and by his resurrection; it is He who, present in his faithful one, leads him on towards God:

"Let naught of things visible or invisible seek to deprive me of the possession of Jesus Christ! Come fire, and cross, and bodily combat with wild beasts, lacerations, tearings, dislocation of bones, mutilation of members, crushing of the whole body, come the worst torments of the devil upon me, provided only I possess Jesus Christ! . . . Him I seek, Him who died for us; Him I want, who rose again for our sakes! The hour draws near for my birth. Forgive me, brethren; hinder me not from living, do not desire my death; bestow not upon the world or the seductions of matter him who desires to be God's. Let me grasp the

pure light; when I shall attain to it I shall be truly a man. Let me imitate the suffering of my God. If anyone has Him in his heart, let him understand my desires, let him be compassionate in my pain, since he himself knows it. . . . My love has been crucified, and there is not within me any fire for matter, but a living water, which murmurs within me and says to me: 'Come to the Father.' I have no more pleasure in corruptible food, nor in the joys of this life. I desire the bread of God, which is the flesh of Jesus Christ, the son of David, and for drink I desire his blood, which is love incorruptible" (*ibid.*, V-VII).

These flaming words of the great martyr were read over and over again in the early Christian church in the times of the martyrs;<sup>24</sup> there is none more vehement or more poignant, but what gives them superhuman beauty is the faith which inspires them; the man who speaks thus has directed all the activities of his life towards union with Christ; if he hears the murmur of living water which comes from Christ's bosom<sup>25</sup> and calls him to the Father, it is because all other love has been crucified in him. And Christ was not only passionately loved as a Master, but also as God: "Let me imitate the passion of my God!" And the faith which shines out so clearly in the face of death sheds a warm light on all the others letters. It is this that we must now briefly study.<sup>26</sup>

What we find here is what we have already found in Clement, "the faith and hope of the elect"; but these Christian mysteries appear in Ignatius in a more vivid light. The difference arises doubtless from the character of these letters: they are not, like the epistle of Clement, official documents or liturgical in style; they are short notes, written in haste by one condemned to death, with all the unconstrained zest of a martyr exhorting his brethren in the faith. Moreover, and this is very important, the fifteen years which separate Ignatius from Clement were marked by a noteworthy progress in the history of the Christian revelation, for during them there appeared the Gospel of St. John, which had a great influence on St. Ignatius. Lastly, in these churches of Syria and Asia where the holy martyr lived and wrote, theological problems were

<sup>24</sup> Irenæus, V, 28, 4; Acts of Perpetua and Felicitas, XIV; Origen, *De Orat.*, XX; *In Cant. Prolog.*

<sup>25</sup> Compare with this text that in the letter of the Martyrs of Lyons, speaking of the deacon Sanctus: "The heavenly spring of living water which comes from the bosom of Christ refreshed and fortified him" (*Hist. Eccles.*, V, 1, 22).

<sup>26</sup> A more detailed study will be found in *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 282-331.

more keenly discussed than they were at Rome, and in a more technical form. Ignatius, full of impatience to be united to Christ by an imminent death, does not stay to discuss these problems, but he is aware of the danger, and is anxious to preserve the faith of Christians.

### *God the Father and Jesus Christ*

What strikes the reader of these letters in a vivid way from the first is the ever-present mention of "God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>27</sup> Towards one and the other the faith and love of the holy martyr go out with the same force; life here below is life "in Christ" or "in God"; the end he aims at is to "attain to God," or to "attain to Christ."<sup>28</sup> Christians are the temples of God, and the temples of Christ; God dwells in them, and so does Christ.<sup>29</sup>

Thus in the Christian life we already find the inseparable union of Father and Son; both are our life here below, both are the goal at which we aim, the object of our hope in heaven. And yet they are not confused together: Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the one Mediator who unites us to his Father: "Be subject to the bishop, and to one another, as Jesus Christ was to his Father according to the flesh."<sup>30</sup> By reason of his Incarnation, the Son of God appears to us indeed in a state of subjection and suffering which is due to his human nature: "He who is above all seasons, outside time, and invisible, became for us visible; being impalpable and impassible,

<sup>27</sup> These two terms are frequently united in this form (*Philad.*, *inscr.* I, 1; *Polyc.*, *inscr.*) or in equivalent forms: "God the Father and Jesus Christ" (*Ephes.*, XXI, 2; *Magn. inscr.*; *Trall.*, I, 1; XII, 2; *Philad.*, III, 2; *Smyrn.*, *inscr.*); "God the Father and Jesus Christ our God" (*Ephes.*, *inscr.*) or "our Saviour" (*Magn. inscr.*).

<sup>28</sup> Life "in Christ": *Ephes.*, *inscr.*, I, 1; III, 1; VIII, 2; X, 3; XI, 1; XI, 2; XII, 2; XX, 2; XXI, 2; "in God," *Ephes.*, VI, 2; *Magn.*, III, 3; XIV; *Trall.*, IV, 1; VIII, 2; *Pot.*, I, 1; VI, 1. "Attain to God," *Ephes.*, XII, 2; *Magn.*, XIV, 21; *Trall.*, XII, 2; XIII, 3; *Rom.*, I, 1; II, 1; IV, 1; IX, 2; *Smyrn.*, XII, 1; *Pol.*, II, 3; VII, 1. "Attain to Christ," *Rom.*, V, 3; VI, 1.

<sup>29</sup> "Temples of God," *Philad.*, VII, 2. "God present in us," *Ephes.*, XV, 3. Christians are "Godbearers and Christbearers," *Ephes.*, IX, 2. "You have in you Jesus Christ," *Magn.*, XII. Cf. what we have said above concerning Jesus Christ as our life, p. 427.

<sup>30</sup> *Magn.*, XIII, 2. These last words, "according to the flesh," are lacking in the Armenian version and are suppressed by Lightfoot; but they are found in the Greek text, and the ancient Latin version, and are retained by the other editors: Bauer, Krueger, Funk-Bihlmeyer.

He became for us passible, and endured for us all kinds of sufferings" <sup>31</sup>

This distinction between the Father and the Son is not a consequence of the Incarnation: in His eternal pre-existence <sup>32</sup> the Son is distinct from the Father and is generated by Him: <sup>33</sup> "Before the ages, He was with the Father, and has appeared at the end" (*Magn.*, VI, 1); "there is only one God, who has manifested himself by Jesus Christ His Son, who is His Word, coming forth from silence, who in all things pleased Him who sent him." <sup>34</sup>

As we see from this last text, the Son of God is also His Word; God is the infinite and peaceful silence; <sup>35</sup> the Word has come forth by the Incarnation and has come to us to speak to us; He is "the true mouth through which the Father has truly spoken" (*Rom.*, VIII, 2). Now He has returned to the bosom of the Father; He has disappeared from this world, but more than ever He is active and is calling us (*Rom.*, III, 3); He enlightens us by His Spirit <sup>36</sup> and leads us towards the Father.

In this theology of Ignatius we can recognise the influence of St. Paul and above all of St. John; and this Christian tradition is

<sup>31</sup> *Pol.*, III, 2. We find the same idea in *Ephes.*, VII, 2: inasmuch as He is flesh, Jesus Christ had a beginning, He is in the flesh, in death, born of Mary, passible; inasmuch as He is spirit He is without beginning, God, true life, born of God, impassible. Cf. *Hist. du Dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, p. 294, n. 2.

<sup>32</sup> *Pol.*, III, 2. Cf. *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 302-304.

<sup>33</sup> Attempts have sometimes been made to interpret the theology of St. Ignatius in a Modalist sense, thus G. Krueger, Kroymann, Bethune-Baker, and above all Loofs, *Paulus von Samosata*, pp. 293-322. This interpretation does not do justice to Ignatius's thought: cf. *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 305-312. It is still more often said that in Ignatius filiation affects Christ only as man; this again is inexact; it is manifest that, considered in his "spirit," that is, in his divine nature, Christ is ἀγέννητος (*Ephes.*, VII, 2); but this term had not in the time of Ignatius the precise sense of "ungenerated" which it took on after the Arian controversy; it signifies "unproduced," and applies to all three divine Persons. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 312-319 and 635-647.

<sup>34</sup> *Magn.*, VIII, 2. Cf. *ibid.*, VII, 2 (in an exhortation to unity): ". . . the one Jesus Christ who has come forth from the One Father, though remaining united to Him, and who has returned to Him."

<sup>35</sup> Cf. *Ephes.*, XIX, 1, speaking of the great mysteries of the life of Christ, the virginity of Mary, her child-bearing, and the death of the Lord: "These are resounding mysteries, which have been wrought in the peaceful silence of God." Cf. *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, p. 321.

<sup>36</sup> On the Holy Spirit, the most explicit text is *Philad.*, VII, 1-2: "Some have wished to deceive me according to the flesh, but the Spirit is not deceived, it comes from God, it knows whence it comes and whither it goes, and it penetrates hidden secrets. . . ." Cf. above p. 423, n. 14, and *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 326-331.

vivified by the intimate action of the Holy Spirit; the imminence of martyrdom brings out the depth of this life, the ardour of desire, and the assurance of faith. This fruitful tradition will be transmitted to heirs worthy of it, St. Polycarp and St. Irenæus.

### § 3. ST. POLYCARP<sup>1</sup>

#### *The Witness of Tradition*

St. Polycarp is of exceptional interest to us: he appears early in the second century, in touch with St. Ignatius; we follow him to Smyrna and Rome through the recollections of St. Irenæus, and lastly, the letter of the Church of Smyrna tells us of his martyrdom in 155. Thus he is for us, in this second century of which we know so little, the embodiment of tradition, as he was for his contemporaries.

When Ignatius stopped at Smyrna, Polycarp received him with such veneration that the martyr afterwards sent him from Troas a special letter; in the praises he gives him, and the advice he tenders him, we see already the bishop of Smyrna as he henceforth appears:

"I honour thy piety, solidly established as on an unshakable rock. . . . Take care of unity, the greatest of goods; assist all others, as the Lord assists thyself. . . . Pray without ceasing . . . watch, and let thy spirit never sleep. . . . Bear the infirmities of all, like a perfect athlete. . . ." (I, 1).

"As for invisible things, pray that they may be revealed to thee. . . ." (II, 2).

"Do not be dismayed by those who, in spite of a trustworthy appearance, teach error. Stand firm as an anvil under the hammer. A great athlete triumphs in spite of the blows which fall upon him. We ought all the more to endure all things for God, so that He may support us. . . ." (III, 1).

That is how Polycarp appeared throughout his life, and when he faced death forty years later. He was the perfect athlete, firm as an anvil, firm as a rock, upon whom rested the churches of Asia;

<sup>1</sup> The editions of St. Polycarp are the same as those of St. Ignatius; we may add to them the historical studies on the saint's martyrdom: H. Delehay, *Les Passions des martyrs et les genres littéraires*, Brussels, 1921, pp. 11-59.

he was the irreconcilable enemy of error;<sup>2</sup> he was also a man of prayer, "whose spirit never slept," one whom the Church of Smyrna celebrated after his death as "an apostolic and prophetic doctor" (*Mart.*, XVI, 2).

### *Letter to the Philippians*

The letter of Polycarp to the Philippians is especially valuable to us because of the guarantee it gives to the letters of St. Ignatius. But it is also interesting in itself, inasmuch as it shows us Christian morals and preaching at the beginning of the second century. The bishop of Smyrna is full of veneration for "the blessed Ignatius, Zosimus and Rufus" (IX, 1), still more for "the blessed and glorious apostle Paul" (III, 2); if he writes to the Philippians, it is to grant their desire (III, 1). He exhorts them to rectitude in the faith (VII, 1), to the memory of the death and resurrection of the Lord (I, 2; II, 2); he particularly urges them to follow the example of Christ:

"Let us have our eyes constantly fixed on our hope, and the pledge of our justice, Jesus Christ: He it is who bore our sins in His own body on the wood, who committed no sin, and in whose mouth was found no guile (*I Pet.* ii, 24, 22), but He suffered all things for our sakes, that we may have life in Him. Let us therefore imitate His patience, and if we suffer for His name, let us give glory to Him. For that is the example He has set forth to us in His own person, and we have believed therein."<sup>3</sup>

When he sets forth to the Philippians the imitation of Jesus Christ, Polycarp also reminds them of His teaching, especially according to the Sermon on the Mount: "Judge not, that you be not judged; forgive, and it will be forgiven you; be merciful, in order to obtain mercy; you will be served according to the measure you mete out to others. Blessed are the poor, and those who suffer persecution for justice, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs" (II, 3).

The Church of Philippi had been saddened by the scandal of the

<sup>2</sup> Thus he writes in his letter, VII, 1: "Whosoever interprets in the sense of his personal desires the words of the Lord, and denies the resurrection and the judgment, is the first born of Satan." Many years afterwards, he will reply to Marcion in the same terms: "Dost thou recognise me?—I recognise the first born of Satan" (*Irenæus*, III, 3, 4; *Migne*, P.G., VII, p. 853).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. V, 2: "Let them walk in the way of truth marked out by the Lord, who became the servant of all. . . ."

presbyter Valens and his wife; Polycarp seizes the occasion in order to condemn avarice, and to recommend chastity and sincerity. And once more he urges his correspondents, in face of the threatened persecution and of heresy, to persevere in faith and patience.

### *Witness of Irenæus*

This letter is the only writing we possess of Polycarp's; but his disciple Irenæus gives us a glimpse of his glorious career during the forty or forty-five years separating the martyrdom of Ignatius from that of Polycarp. In order to bring back to the faith one of the friends of his childhood, Florinus, who had fallen into the Gnostic heresy, Irenæus wrote to him thus:

"These doctrines, Florinus, to say nothing more, are not sound in thought; these doctrines do not agree with the Church; they involve those who believe in them in the greatest impiety; the heretics, even those outside the Church, have never dared to bring these doctrines into the light of day; these doctrines have never been transmitted to you by the presbyters who were before us and who lived with the apostles. For when I was still a child, I saw you with Polycarp; you shone at the imperial court, and endeavoured to gain his approbation. Indeed I remember better those times than recent events. For the things one learns when one is young become one with the soul and unite themselves with it, so that I can say in what place the blessed Polycarp used to sit in order to speak, how he came in and went out, what was the character of his life, his physical appearance, the talks he had with people, how he told of his relations with John and with the others who had seen the Lord, how he reported their words and all that he had learnt from them concerning the Lord, His miracles and His teaching; all this Polycarp had gathered from those who had seen the Word of Life, and he related it all, in conformity with the Scriptures. I carefully listened to all these things then, by the grace of God given me; I have kept them in memory, not on paper but in my heart. Continually, by God's grace, I recall them faithfully, and I can testify before God that if this blessed and apostolic presbyter had heard things such as these, he would have cried out and stopped his ears, saying as he often did: 'O good God, unto what times hast thou reserved me, that I should endure all this!' And whether he was sitting or standing, he would have fled from the place where he had heard such words. This can be shown moreover by the letters which he sent to the neighbouring churches to strengthen them, and to certain brethren, to warn and exhort them" (*Hist. Eccles.*, V, 20, 4-8).



This letter, written in the time of Pope Victor about 186, is one of the most interesting documents in the early history of the church of Asia; it shows the veneration which at the end of the first and the beginning of the second century surrounded the presbyters who had seen the Lord with their eyes and could repeat his words; and after them, the witnesses of that past generation, and amongst them all, Polycarp, "the blessed and apostolic presbyter." It shows us how this influence spread round him into the neighbouring churches, and above all it confirms what we know already of this faithful disciple, "firm as a rock." But this firmness did not make him unfeeling; he suffered, as did St. Ignatius and St. John, when anything divided and troubled the Church: "O good God, to what times has thou reserved me!" All this is confirmed again by the testimony full of veneration that Irenæus gave to his master.<sup>4</sup>

### *St. Polycarp in Rome*

In this passage, Irenæus recalls the journey made to Rome by St. Polycarp under the pontificate of St. Anicetus; he speaks of it more fully in a letter he wrote later to Pope Victor:

"The blessed Polycarp paid a visit to Rome under Anicetus; there were between them some differences of little importance, and they quickly came to agreement; on this question (of the Pasch) they did not desire to quarrel. Anicetus was unable to persuade Polycarp not to observe what he had always observed with John the disciple of Our Lord and the other apostles whom he had known; Polycarp, on his side, could not persuade Anicetus, who said to him that he was obliged to retain the custom of the presbyters who had preceded him. This being so, they remained in communion with each other, and with the Church. Anicetus gave the Eucharist to Polycarp, evidently out of respect, and they parted in peace, and in the Church all were at peace, whether they retained the observance or not" (*Hist. Eccles.*, V. 24, 16-17).<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> *Haer.*, III, 3, 4 (Migne, P.G., VII, 851-855), reproduced by Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.*, IV, 14: "Not only was Polycarp a disciple of the apostles, who had lived with several of those who had seen the Lord, but also he was appointed by the apostles as bishop in the church of Smyrna, for Asia, and we ourselves saw him in our childhood. . . ."

<sup>5</sup> On this incident, cf. G. Bardy, *L'Eglise romaine sous le pontificat de saint Anicet*, in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XVII, 1927, pp. 481-511, especially pp. 496-501.

We shall return later to this Easter question, and the peacemaking intervention by St. Irenæus; what we note here is the part played by St. Polycarp in this matter, his attachment to tradition, his care for the unity of the Church, and lastly, the veneration with which he was regarded.

This veneration, which surrounded the old bishop at Rome, was still more marked at Smyrna. In the account of his martyrdom, we read how the bishop removed his clothes and bent down to take off his shoes: "He did not usually do this himself, for on every occasion the faithful contended for the honour of touching him, so great was the veneration accorded to him, even before his martyrdom, because of the holiness of his life" (*Mart.*, XIII, 2).

### *Martyrdom of St. Polycarp*

The year which followed his visit to Rome<sup>6</sup> saw the martyrdom of St. Polycarp. All Asia was roused; the church of Philomelium asked for an account of his death. The Church of Smyrna entrusted Marcianus, one of its members, with the writing of the account, and sent it round to all the churches. This is "the earliest hagiographical document we possess, and all agree that there does not exist a more beautiful one. It is enough to read it and to weigh each phrase to be convinced that this account is what it claims to be, the work of a contemporary who knew the martyr, saw him in the midst of the flames, and touched the remains of the saint's body with his own hands."<sup>7</sup>

Other martyrs had already been tormented; one only had yielded, a Phrygian named Quintus, who had denounced himself, a practice

<sup>6</sup> On the date of the martyrdom of St. Polycarp, cf. Lightfoot, *op cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 644-722; Harnack, *Chronologie*, Vol. I, pp. 334-356: "There is scarcely a date in the early history of the Church which is so universally accepted as that of the martyrdom of Polycarp, the 23rd February, 155" (p. 334); Corssen. *Das Todesjahr Polycarps*, in *Zeitschrift für N. T. Wissensch.*, 1902, pp. 61-82, confirms this conclusion. We read in the Acts, XXI: "The martyrdom of the blessed Polycarp took place . . . on the seventh of the kalends of March, on a great sabbath day . . . under the proconsulate of Statius Quadratus." The proconsulate of Quadratus is dated, according to the speech of Aelius Aristides and an inscription at Ephesus, in the years 154-155; the 7th of the Kalends of March fell on a sabbath day in the year 155.

<sup>7</sup> Delehaye, *Les Passions des Martyrs*, pp. 12-13. This beautiful account has often been translated: by Racine, when staying in 1662 with his uncle, the chanoine Sconin at Uzès; by Lelong in *Textes et Documents*, 1910; by Dom Leclercq, *Les Martyrs*, Vol. I, p. 65.

disapproved by the Church; the others had been wonderfully constant. Amongst the spectators, some were moved with pity (*Mart.*, II, 2), but others, exasperated by the courage displayed, cried out: "Away with the atheists! Go and find Polycarp!" (*ibid.*, III, 2).

The bishop had, at the urgent request of the faithful, withdrawn to the country. He was betrayed by a young lad, saw the soldiers coming, and would not flee; he made them eat, and asked to be allowed to pray to God; "he was so full of the grace of God that for two hours he could not cease, and those who heard him were struck with admiration" (*ibid.*, VII, 3). He was taken away; Herod the *irenarch* or "High Sheriff," took him into his carriage and endeavoured to persuade him. Eventually Polycarp said: "I will do nothing of what you advise me to do"; and he was brutally thrown out of the carriage. He arrived at the stadium; a heavenly voice was heard by the Christians: "Courage, Polycarp, play the man!"

The proconsul, Statius Quadratus, tried again to shake him, and finally called upon him to curse Christ. Polycarp replied: "For eighty-six years now I have served Him, and He has never done me any ill. How could I blaspheme my King and my Saviour?" He was thereupon declared to be a Christian, and at the request of the populace, he was condemned to be burnt alive. In this way was to be verified the prophetic vision he had had three days earlier: he had seen his pillow on fire, and turning towards the faithful he had said to them: "I am to be burnt alive."

The crowd, mainly of Jews, hastened to prepare the fire; Polycarp was bound on it, "like a holocaust acceptable to God." He raised his eyes to heaven, and prayed:

"O Lord, God Almighty, Father of Jesus Christ, Thy well beloved and blessed Son, who has taught us to know Thee, God of angels, powers, and of all creation and all the race of the just who live in Thy presence! I bless Thee because Thou hast thought me worthy of this day and of this hour, worthy to take part amongst the martyrs in the chalice of Thy Christ, to rise again to eternal life of body and soul in the incorruptibility of the Holy Spirit. May I be this day admitted amongst them in Thy presence, as a fatted and acceptable victim, the destiny which thou hast prepared for me and made me to see in advance, and which Thou bringest about now, O God who liest not, true God! For this grace and for all things I praise Thee, I bless Thee, I glorify Thee

through the eternal and heavenly High Priest, Jesus Christ Thy well beloved Son. Through Him may glory be to Thee, with Him and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever, Amen.”<sup>8</sup>

The fire was lit, and the flames surrounded the martyr's body; it seemed as though it was “not flesh that was burning, but bread that was being baked, or an ingot of gold or silver that was being purified in a furnace; and we smelt a delightful odour, like that of incense or some other precious perfume.” The *confector* killed Polycarp with a dagger; from the wound blood flowed so abundantly that it extinguished the fire. When the faithful went to remove the body from the fire, it was taken away from them, at the instigation of the Jews; who said: “Christians would be capable of leaving the Crucified to give worship to Polycarp! They did not realise that we could never give up Jesus Christ, who suffered for the salvation of those who are saved in the whole world, the innocent for the guilty, and that we could not give worship to another. For Him we adore as being the Son of God; as for the martyrs, we love them as disciples and imitators of the Lord, and they are worthy of it because of their supreme attachment to their King and their Master.”<sup>9</sup>

But the Christians could at least gather the bones of the martyr, and put them in a suitable place. “There we meet together, as far as the Lord permits, in joy and gladness, to celebrate the anniversary day of the martyrdom.”<sup>10</sup>

### *The Lessons of the Martyrdom*

This account is not only one of the most moving in early Christian literature, but also one of the most instructive. It shows us the attitude, at once prudent and firm, recommended by the Church to the faithful in face of persecution. The opinion of pagans was still on the whole violently hostile: the courage of the martyrs called forth pity from some spectators, but in the case of the majority, hatred was increased and exasperated: it was the crowd that clam-

<sup>8</sup> On this prayer, cf. *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, p. 197-200.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 204 et seq.

<sup>10</sup> The Church of Smyrna continued faithful to the celebration of this anniversary, even in the worst days of the persecutions: it was on the day of this feast that the priest Pionius was arrested with several other Christians in 250, during the persecution of Decius: *Acts*, II, 1, ed. Knopf, p. 59.

oured for the arrest of the bishop, and then for his condemnation to death by fire. Amongst these opponents, the Jews were the most bitter: the death of the martyr did not satisfy them, they demanded that his body should be destroyed.<sup>11</sup>

The martyr sought his strength only in prayer; Polycarp, prepared so long for this desired hour, did not tire of prayer, but continued in it when the officers arrested him, when he was bound to the fire, and when he was waiting for death: at this supreme moment his prayer was already an act of thanksgiving, and spontaneously the liturgical formulas which he had so often pronounced came back to his lips. The Christian populace which was so deeply attached to him venerated him still more when sanctified by martyrdom; and yet there is an impassable gulf between him and Christ; no text reveals better than this profession of faith, so full of adoration, what Christ is to His believers: "Him we adore as the Son of God; as for the martyrs, we love them as disciples and imitators of the Lord."

#### § 4. THE CONTROVERSY WITH THE JEWS AND THE LETTER OF BARNABAS

The writings which we have studied in the preceding sections have brought before us great bishops, Clement, Ignatius and Polycarp. They have deserved our study: in the person of these leaders, the Christian Church itself appears before us. The other documents which we find, under the names of apostles, have not the same origin, and do not bring us the same knowledge: the letter of Barnabas is a spurious work; Hermas is an unknown person; the *Didache* is an anonymous work. The Church no longer appears in the person of its great men, but it is still present; these writers are unknown or without interest, but the books themselves are witnesses which enable us to see the Christian people, their struggles, their aims, and their prayers.

<sup>11</sup> This request was addressed to the governor by "Nicetas, father of Herod and brother of Alce" (XVII, 2). This Alce seems to be the one mentioned by Ignatius, *Smyrn.*, XIII; *Polyc.*, VIII. Cf. Lightfoot, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 366. Christianity had therefore penetrated into the family of the irenarch; the reaction of hatred was only the more violent.

The letter of Barnabas will not detain us long.<sup>1</sup> This little book is set forth modestly and humbly without the author's name: "As for me, it is not as a doctor, but as one of yourselves that I will give you some instructions."<sup>2</sup> This anonymous and modest doctor was, especially at Alexandria, identified with St. Barnabas;<sup>3</sup> this apostolic attribution gained for some time great credit for this little work; the confusion has been long dispelled, and for ever, but the epistle is nevertheless not without its interest.

It was composed, it seems, at Alexandria, probably shortly before the revolt of Barkokeba (130-131).<sup>4</sup> It comprises two parts of unequal length and importance: the four last chapters (XVIII-XXI) contain a moral exhortation in which we find the distinction between the two ways of good and evil, presented in the form in which we find it in the *Didache*. The first part, much longer (ch. I-XVIII) is also much more original, and gives the letter its chief interest: it is a controversial work against Judaism; not a scholastic dissertation, but a moving exhortation in face of a great and pressing danger: <sup>5</sup> "The days are evil; the enemy is active and powerful" (ch. II, 1). "The great scandal spoken of in Scripture has come nigh" (ch. IV, 3). "I therefore beg you, I who am one of you, and who love you more than my own life: take care of yourselves, and be not like some people who heap sins upon sins, and who say that the Testament belongs to those (Jews) as to ourselves. It is ours, but those have lost it for ever" (ch. IV, 6-7). We hear in this work not the peaceful speculations of a

<sup>1</sup> This letter is contained in two MSS., both discovered in the nineteenth century: the *Sinaiticus*, discovered by Tischendorf in 1859 and the Jerusalem MS. discovered by Bryennios in 1875. Edited by Gebhardt-Harnack; Funk-Bihlmeyer; Oger, Paris, 1907; Windisch, Tübingen, 1920. In this last work is an abundant annotation; also in the translation by Veil, *Apocryphes du N. T.* by Hennecke, Tübingen 1904, and 1923. The theological teaching has been studied in *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 332-345. Literary study in Puech, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 22-31.

Quotations in text follow the French edition. An English translation by Lightfoot of the whole letter will be found in *Excluded Books of the New Testament*, London, 1927.

<sup>2</sup> I, 8; cf. IV, 6 and 9; VI, 5.

<sup>3</sup> This identification appears already in Clement of Alexandria; cf. Harnack, *Gesch. d. altchristl. Literatur*, Vol. I, p. 60, and *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, p. 344, n. 4; it was adopted by Origen, and also explains why it finds a place in the *Sinaiticus* after the New Testament.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, p. 332, n. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. the just comments by Veil (*Handbuch*, p. 208, and *Neutestamentl. Apokryphen*, 1924, p. 503).

catechist, but "the cry of alarm by the shepherd." This alarm gives the letter its great interest, and also accounts for the exaggerations in which the controversialist indulges.

### *Symbolical Interpretation of the Law*

In order to preserve his correspondents, whose peril moves him so deeply, the writer defends the radical thesis which the Church never approved, and the danger of which will soon be revealed by Marcion, that the old alliance never existed as a positive law willed by God subjecting the Jewish people to certain practices or ceremonies; it had only a symbolical value, which the Jews failed to realise, in attaching themselves to the letter: the circumcision demanded by God was not a carnal circumcision (ch. IX, 4); the alimentary prescriptions were only allegories (ch. X); the true sabbath is the rest of God after six thousand years, inaugurating a new world (ch. XV). The only Temple acceptable to God is not an edifice in stone such as the Temple of Jerusalem, which God interdicted through His prophets, but the spiritual temple of our souls (ch. XVI).

All this is not only weak, but dangerous, as will soon appear; but it must not be overlooked that Barnabas was only following the example of numerous Jewish exegetes, who likewise allegorised the Law;<sup>6</sup> in utilising this weapon of allegorical exegesis he thought he could defend the Church and save it from Judaism; in reality he was destroying the historical facts on which the Church was based; the Church has rejected this allegory, this gnosis to which Barnabas invites the faithful.<sup>7</sup> The apologetic argument of Barnabas contains another feature, however, of permanent value: the divinity of the Son of God, and the infinite value of His Passion.

<sup>6</sup> Philo, *De migr. Abrah.*, 89 (I, 450). Philo rejects this allegory, which sees only the symbol and denies the reality, and certainly Barnabas goes beyond Philo, but only by travelling further, along the same road. Cf. Heinisch, *Der Einfluss Philos auf die älteste christliche Exegese*, Münster, 1908, especially pp. 66, 106, 262.

<sup>7</sup> I, 5: "I am writing to you briefly in order that, together with the faith, you may have a perfect gnosis." IX, 8-9: "What says the gnosis? Learn it. It says: 'Hope in him who must manifest himself to you in the flesh, Jesus. For man is a land which suffers. . . .'" The gnosis is here presented by Barnabas as a gift deposited by God in the soul of the master, and communicated by the latter to those who are worthy; it is in the light of this gnosis that the author develops his allegorical exegesis. Cf. *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II. pp. 344-345.

### Theology

To the disciples of Barnabas, as to those of St. Paul, the Passion of Jesus appeared first of all as a scandal; the apologist effaces nothing, but on the contrary brings it out into full light, and shows the divine power of it:

"If the Lord endured that His flesh should be given up to destruction, this was in order to purify us by the forgiveness of sins, which takes place through the sprinkling of His blood" (V, 1).

"If the Lord endured to suffer for our souls, though He is the Lord of the whole world, and the one to whom God said at the foundation of the world: 'Let us make man to our image and likeness,' how could He endure to suffer at the hand of man? Learn this. The prophets, receiving grace from Him, prophesied about it, and it is in order to abolish death, and to manifest the resurrection from the dead, that He endured to suffer, for He had to appear in the flesh in order to fulfil the promise given to our fathers, and to prepare for Himself a new people, and to show while still upon earth that it is He who will bring about the resurrection, and will judge" (V, 5).<sup>8</sup>

He recognises also in the Incarnation a manifestation of God: our minds, incapable of sustaining the immediate vision of the god-head, are able to contemplate it veiled in flesh (ch. V, 10). By these great theological ideas, Barnabas is linked up with the most authentic Christian tradition; he echoes St. Paul, and prepares the way for St. Irenæus.<sup>9</sup> By his anti-Jewish polemic, he testifies, not indeed to the deep thought of the Church, but at least to the danger which Judaism constituted for it, and the Church's reaction to the danger.

This fact must be borne in mind by the historian: the violence and success of the Marcionite propaganda will be understood better if Barnabas has been read: the condemnations imprudently formulated in this epistle against the Jewish legalism, will be pronounced by Marcion against the very author of the Law; not only the Jews will be affected, but also their God. The excessive character

<sup>8</sup> This passage calls up numerous reminiscences in the literature of the second century and those which followed: Irenæus, *Demonstr.*, VI and XXXVIII; G. Hippolytus, *Anaphora of the Apostolic Tradition*, etc. Cf. *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, p. 339, n. 2.

<sup>9</sup> E.g., in his doctrine of the "recapitulation"; we find in Barnabas (V, 11) the verb ἀνακεφαλαιῶ, familiar to St. Paul (*Rom.* xiii, 9; *Ephes.* i, 10) and to St. Irenæus, but not found elsewhere in the apostolic Fathers or apologists.



of these exaggerations will show the Church the danger in this unwise apologetic, and will keep her clear of it once and for all.<sup>10</sup>

### § 5. THE MORAL REFORM AND PENANCE IN THE ROMAN CHURCH. THE SHEPHERD OF HERMAS<sup>1</sup>

#### *The Book and the Author*

Of all the writings of the Apostolic Fathers, there is none more instructive than the *Shepherd* of Hermas, but there is none more difficult to interpret. In this first half of the second century which is so obscure to us, this book presents in simple and sincere pictures, not indeed high theological doctrines, but Christian life in its simplest, commonest, and at the same time its deepest form. While arousing our curiosity in this way, it also presents as many arduous problems as it offers aspects: its date, its composition, its character, its doctrine—all are matter for discussion. It is not that the style is difficult—it is simple and abrupt, like that of a man of the people; but the thought is often incomplete, often also obscured by additions: the writer was evidently not quite satisfied with what he had said, but instead of effacing it, he added to it new developments which often agree ill with the first text.

This explains the fortune of this work: it was accepted almost everywhere with great favour in the second century; in the third,

<sup>10</sup> We must remark in conclusion that this Jewish danger, and the strong reaction against it, can be explained by what we know of the great influence of the Jews at Alexandria: previous to the Christian preaching this great influence is shown by the life and work of Philo; in the first centuries of the Christian era it continued and threatened the Church: it was at Alexandria above all that the apocryphal Gospels, with their Judaizing tendencies, were read.

<sup>1</sup> Editions: Hilgenfeld, Leipzig, 1866; Gebhardt-Harnack, 1877; Funk, Tübingen, 1881; Lelong, 1912; German translations and notes by Weinel, *Neutestamentl. Apokryphen*, pp. 217-229; Dibelius, Tübingen, 1923. On the old Latin translation, see Turner in *Journal of Theol. Studies*, XXI, 1920, pp. 193-209. A quarter of the Greek text has been found in a fourth-century papyrus, cf. C. Bonner, *A papyrus Codex of the Shepherd of Hermas*, University of Michigan, 1934.

Chief studies: T. Zahn, *Der Hirt des Hermas*, Gotha, 1868; A. Stahl, *Patristische Untersuchungen*, Leipzig, 1901, pp. 223-359; d'Alès, *L'édit de Caliste*, 1914, pp. 52-113; Puech, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 71-95; Lebreton, *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 346-387. [Good discussion also in Cayré, *Manual of Patrology*, Paris, 1936, pp. 83-96. English translation by Lightfoot in *Excluded Books of the New Testament*, London, 1927.—Tr.]

the West rejected it, and in the East it kept its place only in Egypt; from the fourth century it disappeared very quickly.<sup>2</sup> What the early Fathers loved in it was not its theology, but its moral teaching, its conception of the Christian life; that constitutes its value, and that is why it calls for our attention here.

The Book of Hermas as we have it consists of a series of five Visions, ten Commandments, and ten Parables or Similitudes; the writer himself suggests another division which corresponds better to his plan: in a first part, the Church appears under various symbols, in four successive Visions; the second part, the longer and more important, contains the revelation of the Shepherd: after a Vision which constitutes an introduction, the Shepherd teaches Christians their duties and exhorts them to penance; this is the theme of the Commandments and the Parables.

This short outline already enables us to realise the character of the book: it is an apocalypse, full of visions and revelations; but at the same time it is an autobiography. The writer calls himself Hermas; he was a slave freed by Rhoda, became rich, married a shrewish woman, and had several children who turned out badly; they apostatised, denounced their parents, and ruined them. Hermas had, it seems, been brought up in Christianity, but he had been only a poor kind of Christian; when he was ruined, he was converted.<sup>3</sup> It was his anxiety for his children that led him to preach; he had the joy of seeing them converted (*Sim.*, VII, 4), and the angel revealed to him the re-establishment of his fortune. To these details in the book itself, the *Muratorian Canon* adds another: Hermas was a brother of Pope Pius (about 140-154). This last indication would put the composition of the book in about the end of the first half of the second century.<sup>4</sup> The work indeed

<sup>2</sup> On all this tradition cf. *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 346-348, and above all Harnack, *Gesch. der Literatur*, Vol. I, pp. 51-58.

<sup>3</sup> *Vis.*, III, 6, 7: "When thou wert rich, thou wert good for nothing; now thou canst serve, thou art fit for life."

<sup>4</sup> This is also the date suggested by the book itself: the description of the persecution, which applies better to the system inaugurated by Trajan than to the procedure of Domitian (Lelong, *op. cit.*, pp. xxix-xxxii), and the new Gnosticism, not yet a great danger (*ibid.*, p. xxxvii). Against this date there is the mention of Clement (*Vis.*, II, 4, 3). This is certainly difficult to explain, but this difficulty cannot prevail against the arguments on the other side; it can be solved if we suppose that the first visions belong in Greek text to the time of Clement and were put forth under Pius. Cf. Lightfoot, *Clement*, Vol. I, pp. 359-360; Turner, in *Journal of Theol. Studies*, Vol. XXI, pp. 193-194.

was not all composed at once; the different parts which go to make it up are separated by fairly large intervals, and reveal great changes in the state of the Church and the preoccupations of the author. At the beginning of the work, a violent persecution is in progress; in the second, we have the after-effects of this trial, the reconciliations which the apostates implore and the Church grants or refuses. At the beginning the author has in view the final catastrophe; later on it is penance that preoccupies him, the conditions it requires, the renewal to which it should lead: in the family of Hermas himself, the situation is different, and the apostate children have repented.

This succession of episodes rather loosely linked together is the cause of a certain lack of consistence in the book, and a lack of coherence in the doctrine, which it is difficult to unify; but it has for a historian the interest of a film which is slowly projected before his eyes, and brings out through the witness of a freedman of Rome the moral preoccupations of Christianity.

### *Moral Reform*

That is indeed what we must look for in the first place: Hermas has no theological training, and speculative questions do not interest him; we are not surprised to find that from the doctrinal standpoint he is extremely inconsistent; but he is a sincere and fervent Christian, very much occupied with the moral problems arising out of life around him; he sets them forth as he sees them; we could not desire a more sincere witness.

Like all moralists, Hermas is a righter of wrongs, and the first impression he gives us is a severe one: the Church first of all appears to him in the guise of an infirm old lady seated in a chair; but from the second vision onwards she regains her powers, and in the third vision she is "young, beautiful and gay": the message of the Lord has been heard, hearts have revived, and have taken new life.<sup>5</sup> From so rapid a transformation it will be inferred that the evil was less deeply rooted than it seemed. This impression is strengthened in the course of the book; we find there under various forms and symbols the examination of conscience of the Roman Church; this examination shows us that the majority of Christians

<sup>5</sup> Vis. III, 11-13.

are good people who have never lost their baptismal innocence, and have no need of penance.<sup>6</sup>

Thus in the eighth parable, we have a great willow tree which represents the Law or the Son of God; the archangel Michael has detached some branches from this tree and given them to mankind: this is the law taught to the faithful; the branches which they have received and carry represent symbolically the state of their consciences. Several bring back branches which are split, dried up, or at least have lost their leaves; these are those Christians who are sinners or negligent. "Others carry their branches green and as they had received them from the angel; this is the case with most people."<sup>7</sup> The just are therefore a majority in the Church.

### *Strength and Weakness*

This statement has all the more weight because of the delicate nature of Hermas's conscience: the scene with which the book opens (*Vis.*, I, 1), the remorse arising from a look or a desire, shows that the Christian ideal was strong within him, with all its exigencies.

Yet this Church has also its weaknesses; we find the details in the third vision, and in the eighth and ninth parables. The general impression is well set forth in *Vision*, III, 11:

"Why did the woman appear to thee in the first vision as old, and seated in a chair? It was because thy mind was aged, already exhausted and without power, because of thy softness and thy doubts . . . (she was seated in a chair) because every infirm person by reason of his weakness sits in a chair in order to support his weakened body."<sup>8</sup>

Thus, the most widespread and serious fault is hesitation, or discouragement, such as that of old men who have no more hope,

<sup>6</sup>Cf. Lelong, *op. cit.*, p. lviii; Duchesne, *Hist. ancienne de l'Eglise*, Vol. I, p. 229.

<sup>7</sup>*Simil.*, VIII, 1, 16. Hermas himself interprets this symbol thus (*ibid.*, 3, 8): "Those who have given back the branches as they received them, are the saints and the just, who have lived in perfect purity of heart and in the faithful observance of the commandments of the Lord." Above these again Hermas distinguishes those who have brought back branches covered with new shoots, or even with fruits: these are the confessors and martyrs.

<sup>8</sup>In *Vis.*, II, 4, 1, Hermas explained this aged character of the Church by saying that she is the oldest of creatures; there he was considering rather the transcendent Church; here the Church Visible.

who ask "if all this is real or not" (*Vis.*, III, 4, 3). Hence the great aim of the first chapters is to strengthen hope, and this not so much by the preaching of penance as by the announcement of the end: "The Tower will be quickly built" (*ibid.*, III, 8, 9). In the rest of the work, the perspective widens and the effort is directed more and more towards penance.

### *Riches*

The softening and lukewarmness arises above all from contact with the world: the Church has numerous members, it gathers them from all ranks of society; the rich are particularly liable to deteriorate:

"Those who brought back their branches with one half green and the other dried up are men occupied with business, and who have become almost foreign to the society of the saints" (*Sim.*, VIII, 8, 1).

"Those who have brought branches with two-thirds dried up and the other green are men who, after embracing the faith, have amassed riches and won the esteem of the pagans. This has been a source of great pride, and they have become haughty; they have abandoned the truth, and left the society of the just in order to share in the life of the pagans, finding this way easier. Nevertheless they have not denied God, but have persevered in the faith, although they do not the works of the faith . . ." (*ibid.*, IX, 1).

"From the third mountain, which is covered with thorns and thistles, there come these believers: some are rich, the others are men full of the bustle of affairs. The thistles represent the rich; the thorns, those who are entangled in the multiplicity of affairs. These last, those who are hampered by a mass of business of all kinds, do not frequent the servants of God, but walk at a distance, at random, stifled as they are by their occupations. As for the rich, these have little to do with the servants of God, lest these should ask something from them. Such men will enter only with difficulty into the kingdom of God"<sup>9</sup> (*ibid.*, IX, 20, 1).

In the persecution, "their business and their riches lead them to deny their Master"; they will enter into the Tower when they will have been deprived of their riches; "thy own example will bring this truth home to thee: when thou wert rich, thou wert good for nothing; now thou canst serve, thou art fit for life" (*Vis.*, III, 6, 5-7). This last trait confirms the impression we get from

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *Vis.*, III, 11, and *Sim.* 1.

the others: the rich whom Hermas criticises are those of his own circle: prosperous merchants, absorbed by business, and puffed up by their quickly won fortunes, but upset by persecution, unless this saves them by despoiling them. Even apart from these times of crisis, these rich people run the risk of feeling out of their element in the midst of the lowly folk who surround them in the Christian community; they are always obsessed by the fear that they are going to be called upon to give something; they are inclined to regret their fine pagan surroundings, and to cast an envious glance over the wall of the Church towards the world outside.<sup>10</sup>

### *Ambition*

Another evil which Hermas strongly denounces is ambition, with the dissensions to which it gives rise. In the maternal exhortation the Church addresses to all her children, she especially warns the leaders, and those who occupy the first places: "Take care, my children, that your divisions do not lead you to loss of life!" (*Vis.*, III, 9, 7). In the parable of the willow tree, the Shepherd emphatically points out the same danger:

"Those who have brought back their branches green, but slit, are men who have always remained faithful and good, but quarrel bitterly amongst themselves for the first places and for honours. They are foolish thus to dispute for priority. But at heart these men are good; thus, as soon as they have become aware of my commandments, they have purified their hearts and have hastened to do penance. Accordingly they have been allowed to dwell in the Tower; but if ever one of them should fall again into discord, he will be expelled from the Tower and lose his life" (*Simil.*, VIII, 4-5).

<sup>10</sup> We may recall here what St. James has already written concerning the attentions sometimes multiplied to the rich, to the despite of the poor: "If there shall come into your assembly a man having a golden ring, in fine apparel, and there shall come in also a poor man in mean attire, and you have respect to him that is clothed with the fine apparel, and shall say to him: 'Sit thou here well'; but say to the poor man: 'Stand thou there, or sit under my footstool': Do you not judge within yourselves, and are become judges of unjust thoughts? Hearken, my dearest brethren: hath not God chosen the poor in this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom? . . . But you have dishonoured the poor man" (*James* ii, 2-6). The rich St. James has in mind are also merchants who go from town to town, promising themselves great profits, and boasting of their riches (*IV*, 13-17). On the penetration of the rich into the Church, cf. Harnack, *Mission und Ausbreitung*, pp. 559 *et seq.*

These last words show that the evil is much less serious at Rome than it was at Corinth;<sup>11</sup> Clement could then give to the ring-leaders no other counsel than to leave the country; at Rome, exhortations have sufficed, and there is peace.

Many other vices are rebuked by Hermas, especially in the Parables VIII (6, 4 *et seq.*) and IX (15, 3 and 19 *et seq.*); but they are less characteristic of the state of the Roman Church at this time. What is most interesting to observe is the persecution, the dangers it creates, the terrible trial it represents, and the results it brings.

### *Persecution*

In the Visions, the Church appears as threatened by an imminent persecution; a great tribulation is expected, to be followed, it is hoped, by a definitive triumph.<sup>12</sup> The second part of the book carries us a few years further on; the persecution has struck the Church; not the fiscal inquisition inaugurated by Domitian, but the persecution of the Christian name, as determined by the procedure laid down by Trajan; this name is the pride of the Christian and the reason for his martyrdom. The martyrs appear in the ninth parable; they are the believers who come from the eleventh mountain:

"These are the men who have suffered for the name of the Son of God, and who have displayed all the eagerness and generosity of their hearts in suffering and sacrificing their lives. . . . All those who have suffered for the Name are glorious before the Lord, and have seen all their sins blotted out. . . . All those who, when haled before the magistrates and subjected to the questioning, have not denied but have suffered willingly, rejoice before the Lord with a much greater glory. . . . But there are others who showed themselves timid and hesitant; only after debating in their hearts whether they ought to deny or confess did they decide to suffer; these last have as their symbol the less beautiful fruits, because of this thought which arose in their hearts" (*Sim.*, IX, 28, 2).

Fear has not been entirely removed; the persecution still threatens the Church; the parable ends with an ardent exhortation:

<sup>11</sup> Lelong accordingly exaggerates when he writes (*op. cit.*, p. xxxvi): "There took place at Rome in the time of Hermas what had taken place at Corinth at the time of Clement."

<sup>12</sup> *Vis.*, II, 2, 7; III, 4; and above all *Vis.*, IV, the sea-monster.

"You who suffer for the Name, ought to give thanks to God that He has judged you worthy to bear this name, and to receive the healing of all your sins. Consider yourselves therefore happy; indeed, think that you have done a great work when you suffer for God. The Lord gives you life, and you do not think of this. For your sins have weighed you down, and if you had not suffered for the name of the Lord, they would have made you dead to God. It is to you I speak, you who know not whether you ought to deny or confess; confess that you have a Master, if you do not wish to be cast into prison as renegades. If the pagans punish a slave who has denied his master, what, think you, will the Lord, who is the Master of all things, do to you? Cast these thoughts out of your heart, in order that you may live always for God" (*Sim.*, 28, 5).

Turning over the pages of this book, we seem to mingle with the crowd of Christians in Rome; we feel ourselves constrained by the bitterness of the persecutions, but we also realise the pride and power of the faith in the hearts of these neophytes.

### *The Hierarchy*

If we try to find in the *Shepherd* some indications of the constitution of the Church, we note first of all that the monarchical episcopate is not directly mentioned; but we shall not overlook the fact that the writer was brother to the Bishop of Rome.<sup>13</sup> He speaks on several occasions of the heads of the Church, presbyters and pastors;<sup>14</sup> he does not spare them from rebuke; he warns them above all against love of first places, vanity, ambition;<sup>15</sup> he stigmatises the untruthful deacons who have dissipated the goods of widows;<sup>16</sup> but he praises the charitable bishops who open wide their houses to the brethren, who maintain widows, and who lead

<sup>13</sup> Turner (*art. cit.*, p. 194) rightly says: "As the *Shepherd* was published by Hermas during his brother's tenure of the see, and as it seems probable that in Mandate IX he is intending to glance at conditions actually prevailing within the Roman community, then the conclusion is natural that Hermas comes before the public at this particular time both because his relationship to the bishop will attract attention to his revelations, and because in his capacity as a seer he can do something to assist his brother in the difficulties of his position."

<sup>14</sup> Presbyters: *Vis.* II, 2, 6; III, 9, 7; II, 4, 2-3; pastors, IX, 31, 5-6. He uses the titles "presbyter" and "bishop" in the same sense: *Vis.*, III, 5, 1; cf. the notes by Funk, and Lelong, p. lxxxii.

<sup>15</sup> *Vis.*, III, 9, 7; *Simil.*, VIII, 7, 4.

<sup>16</sup> *Simil.*, IX, 26, 2.



a holy life.<sup>17</sup> We find traces still of the rivalry which at the end of the first century occasionally broke out between the prophets and the presbyters (*Vis.*, III, 1, 8), and already we notice a struggle between the martyrs and the hierarchy (*ibid.*, 9); this will be more pronounced in the third century, in the time of Cornelius and Cyprian.

### *The Church the Mother of the Christian*

Beyond all these human inequalities, faults and virtues in the leaders of the Church, Hermas contemplates the Church herself, the Mother of the Christian.<sup>18</sup> Like a mother, the Church exhorts her Christian children:

"Hear me, my children; I have brought you up in great simplicity, innocence and holiness, thanks to the mercy of the Lord, who has poured out justice upon you. . . . Make peace to reign amongst you, so that I also may be able to go joyfully before the Father to give an account of all of you to your Lord" (*Vis.*, III, 9, 1).

We see from these last words that the office of the Church towards the Christian is the same as the office of Christ, that of a mediator with the Father;<sup>19</sup> this is because the Church is one with Christ. Hermas expresses this by the symbol of the Tower which is the Church, and the rock which is Christ: "The Tower was formed as of one single stone; no join could be seen in it; one would have said that the stone had been drawn from the Rock itself; the whole gave me the impression of a monolith" (*Simil.*, IX, 9, 7). "Thou seest," he says again, "that the Tower forms one mass with the Rock."<sup>20</sup>

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 27, 2. Other features in this indication of the hierarchy will be found in *Vis.*, II, 2, 6; III, 5, 1; IV, 3; IX, 7. Cf. Dobschuetz, *Urchristl. Gemeinden*, p. 233; Weinel, *Neutest. Apokryphen*, p. 330.

<sup>18</sup> On this belief, so dear to the Christians of the second century, cf. Lebreton, *Mater Ecclesia*, in *Recherches de Science religieuses*, 1911, pp. 572-573.

<sup>19</sup> See also *Simil.*, X, 2, 2: "Et hic (Pastor) apud me de his bene interpretetur et ego apud dominum."

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Durell, *The Historic Church* (Cambridge, 1906, pp. 99 *et seq.* This affirmation of the identity between the Church, the body of Christ, and its head, could appeal to the teaching of St. Paul, and will remain dear to all Christians. Hermas also affirms that the Church was the first of all creatures to be created, and that the world was formed for her (*Vis.*, I, 4, 1); this conception reappears in a more definite form in the *Ila Clementis*. Cf. *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, p. 388, 392.

*Penance*

Of all the moral problems dealt with by Hermas, there is one which dominates all the others, that of penance and reconciliation. This is the chief object of the message transmitted to the Roman Church.<sup>21</sup>

This message is set forth with great energy; but it formulates at the same time two theses which at first sight are impossible to harmonise: there is no other penance than baptism, and yet another penance is offered. Hermas is himself aware of this contradiction, at least apparently, and sets it forth clearly:

"I have heard, O Lord, some masters teach that there is no other penance than that which we made when we descended into the water and there received the pardon of our previous faults." "Thou has well understood, it is so. For he who has received the forgiveness of his sins ought to sin no more but remain in innocence. But since thou wishest to know the last word of all, I will discover also this to thee: . . . For those who were called before these days, the Lord established this penance, and set me over it. But I say to thee that if any one should, after this great and solemn call, yield to a temptation of the devil and sin, there is a penance; but if he falls again indefinitely, to do penance again, let him hope not for fruit; his salvation is indeed compromised." "I revive," I cried, "after the very precise explanations you have just given me, for I know that, if I do not commit new sins, I shall be saved." "Thou wilt be saved," he said to me, "as also will those who act thus" (*Command.*, IV, 3).

The last words of this passage reveal its significance: what causes Hermas anxiety is the danger in which are those believers who have sinned after their baptism, and amongst these he includes himself. Are these lost beyond recall? They would be, if one had to adhere rigorously to the principle laid down at first: there is only one penance, baptism; but the Lord, knowing "the weakness of man and the malice of the devil," has instituted another penance, and has set the Shepherd over it. This merciful institution, which remedies past faults, must not encourage future sins: to those, then, who have not yet received baptism, or who have just received

<sup>21</sup> Cf. A. d'Alès, *L'édit de Calliste*, 1914, pp. 53-113. In the *Shepherd*, three portions especially concern the question of penance: the third Vision: the construction of the Tower (d'Alès, *op. cit.*, p. 54); the fourth Commandment: chastity; there is no other penance besides baptism (*ibid.*, p. 67); the eighth and ninth Parables: the branches, the twelve mountains, and the Tower (*ibid.*, p. 87).

it, the principle is repeated: there is no other penance besides baptism. Does this mean that the penance preached by Hermas is, so to speak, a Jubilee, which will never be repeated? Certainly not;<sup>22</sup> and the proof is that later on the same promise of reconciliation will be made, accompanied by the same warning: this is the last pardon.<sup>23</sup> In all these texts we see the pressing exhortations of a preacher, and we must not look for the precision of a canonist.

What we note above all is the strength of the Christian ideal: a grave fault after baptism is an unworthy falling back; an indefinite perspective of such faults cannot be considered, but since unfortunately these falls have taken place in the past, the guilty ones are restored, with the warning that such a fault must never be repeated.<sup>24</sup>

This reparation of sin is regarded and can only be regarded as a return into the Church;<sup>25</sup> this is already the teaching of the third Vision: one can be saved only by entering into the Tower; and "the Tower which you see being built is Myself, the Church."<sup>26</sup>

### *Theology*

The problems we have so far studied are the constant subject of the preoccupations of Hermas; but we have noticed therein more than one obscure point, especially in the question of penance and the reconciliation of sinners. If we pass from moral problems to theological conceptions, we must be prepared for more serious confusion: these high speculations are entered upon by Hermas only occasionally, in order to illuminate the moral questions which occupy him: thus in the fifth parable he preaches the meritorious character of fasting and works of supererogation; in order to explain this he sets forth to Christians the example of Christ, and doubtless

<sup>22</sup> This comparison of the Jubilee, first advanced by Batiffol, *Etudes de théologie positive*, Vol. I, p. 57, has been adopted by Lelong, *op. cit.*, p. lxiv, but is rightly rejected by d'Alès, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

<sup>23</sup> *Simil.*, IX, 26, 5.

<sup>24</sup> There is no reference in the *Shepherd* to the three unpardonable sins (apostasy, adultery, homicide) which will appear as such in Tertullian.

<sup>25</sup> This essential point is misunderstood by Lelong, *op. cit.*, pp. lxxiii-lxxv, but is well established by d'Alès, *op. cit.*, pp. 104 *et seq.*

<sup>26</sup> In the eighth Parable, VIII, 6, 6, we see penitent believers who are admitted into "the external precincts" of the Tower: in this symbol we probably have the situation of those who cannot be readmitted into the Church but who remain on the threshold in penance and prayer; cf. d'Alès, *op. cit.*, pp. 111 *et seq.*

nothing is more excellent, but, too anxious about the moral lesson, he forgets theology: Jesus appears to him as a faithful servant who, having been charged by God to care for his vineyard, did more than his duty, more than the Master of the vineyard had asked of him: ordered to surround it with a fence, he dug it, weeded it, and cleaned it of noxious plants; the Master of the vineyard, touched by this zeal, made his servant a co-heir with his son.

This may lead to very useful moral resolutions, but it is difficult to harmonise with the Christian Faith. Hermas himself sees this and perhaps hears those around him saying: "Why, O Lord, is the Son of God represented as a servant in the parable?" He feels the objection strongly, and to parry it, he has recourse to his usual procedure; he does not strike out, but he adds; he tries to enunciate more correctly the mystery of the Incarnation, and above all he hastens to draw from the new interpretation he presents a new moral lesson: just as the flesh, that is, the humanity of Christ, served in all faithfulness and purity the divinity it bore within itself, so also the Christian must keep without stain the spirit which dwells in him: the moralist is pleased with this useful instruction; the theologian is less satisfied with the theological conception it suggests.<sup>27</sup>

Anyone who is familiar with the *Shepherd*, and the embarrassment of thought, and still more of expression, in which the writer is involved, will not be too surprised at these obscurities and incoherences, and above all he will take care not to hold the official teaching of the Church responsible for the awkwardness of this amateur theologian; what we must gather above all from the fifth Parable is the uneasy protest of the Christian conscience: the Son of God is not a servant; and also the firm affirmation of his redemptive office and his lordship:

"God created his people, and entrusted them to his Son; and the Son established angels over the people to guard them; and He Himself has washed away their sins with many tears and labours. Having thus washed away the sins of the people, He has shown them the ways of life, giving to them the law He had received from His Father. Thou

<sup>27</sup> If the parity proposed by this interpretation were pressed, the divinity of Christ would be reduced to a sanctification similar to that accorded to all Christians; this would do violence to the thought of Hermas just as much as to Christian doctrine; hence we must be careful not to interpret too strictly the imprudent expressions of the writer. Cf. *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité* Vol. II, p. 372.

seest that He is the Lord of the people, having received all power from His Father" (*Simil.*, V, 6, 2-4).

But what we must notice above all is that the points still vague in the fifth Parable are taken up again and firmly treated in the two last, the eighth and the ninth. The seer contemplates an immense Rock, in which a door has recently been hewn:

"What is the rock, and the door?" "This rock and this door, is the Son of God." "How then, O Lord, is the rock old, and the door new?" "Hear and understand, O man who understandest nothing. The Son of God was born before all creation, so that He was the counsellor of His Father in His creative work. That is why He is old." "But why, O Lord, is the door new?" "Because it is in the last days of the world that He has been manifested; that is why the door is new (and it has been made) in order that those who must be saved shall enter through it into the kingdom of God. . . . None will enter the kingdom of God if he has not received the name of the Son. . . ." (*Simil.*, IX, 12, 1.)

The Son of God, born before all creation, counsellor of His Father in the work of creation, is both rock and door; "His name is great, infinite, and upholds the whole world";<sup>28</sup> "He manifested Himself"<sup>29</sup> by the Incarnation; He is the door: "He is the only entrance that gives access to the Lord; hence no-one will have access to Him if he goes not through His Son." The highest angels, even, can find access to God only through the Son: "Of these glorious angels not one will have access to God without Him; whosoever has not received His name will not enter into the kingdom of God." (*Simil.*, IX, 12, 6.)

On the rock a tower is built: this is the Church. It is formed of one single stone, and there is no join to be seen; it seems to have been hewn from the rock, and the whole, tower and rock, gives the impression of a monolith (*ibid.*, IX, 9, 7): the Church is one, Christ and the Church are only one Body. And the parable develops, manifesting the indispensable mediation of the Son of God; it concludes by pressing exhortations to martyrdom, fidelity and penance.

It is this deep and sincere Christian faith which made the *Shepherd* in the second century a book dear to very many Christians; and the same character still makes us look upon Hermas as

<sup>28</sup> *Simil.*, IX, 14, 5: Hermas here repeats *Hebr.* i, 3.

<sup>29</sup> This expression is much more correct than that of "habitation" found in the fifth Parable.

a Christian worthy of sympathy and respect, in spite of the incertitudes and weaknesses in his theology.

## § 6. PRAYER IN THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH<sup>1</sup>

### *The Example and Teaching of Christ*

The reading of the Gospels and the writings of the apostles have revealed to us the fundamental importance of prayer in the individual life of all Christians and in the social life of the Church. Jesus Christ our leader is, in this as in all things, also our model. It was by prayer that He prepared Himself for the great mysteries and great events in His life: His baptism, the choice of the apostles, the confession of St. Peter, the Transfiguration, and above all His Passion.<sup>2</sup> It was in prayer that He sought repose and power;<sup>3</sup> it was also by prayer that He desired His apostles to prepare themselves for the great trials and works which awaited them.<sup>4</sup>

This teaching of the Master was not forgotten; prayer was for the apostles their chief and indispensable duty; when the increasing number of the faithful made their task too heavy, they instituted deacons so as to transfer to them a part of their ministry, reserving themselves for "prayer and preaching" (*Acts*, VI, 4). St. Paul asks "incessant prayer" from his faithful (*I Thess.* v, 17); similarly St. Ignatius from the Ephesians (x, 1) and from Polycarp (i, 3).

This prayer of the Christian, the first of his religious duties, and at the same time his consolation and his power, is something so great that God alone can teach it. The apostles understood this: from Judaism they had received a religious teaching, and the custom of prayer; most of them again had been trained in prayer by John the Baptist; and yet they felt that they had everything to

<sup>1</sup> Cf. on prayer and worship in the Antenicene Church, *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 174-247; Dom Cabrol, *The Prayer of the Early Christians*, London, 1930; Bardy, *L'Eglise à la fin du 1er siècle*, pp. 47-76.

<sup>2</sup> Prayer at the baptism, *Luke* iii, 21; at the choosing of the apostles, vi, 12; at Cæsarea Philippi, ix, 18; at the Transfiguration, ix, 29; the sacerdotal prayer, *John* xvii; prayer at the Agony in the Garden, *Matt.* xxvi, 39, and parallel verses; prayer on the Cross, *Luke* xxiii, 34, 46.

<sup>3</sup> *Mark* i, 35; *Luke* v, 16.

<sup>4</sup> *Matt.* xxvi, 41; *Mark* xiv, 38; *Luke* xxii, 46.

learn and when one day they saw Jesus praying, they said to him: "Lord teach us to pray." It was then that Jesus taught them the *Our Father* (Luke xi, 1-4); but oral teaching, even that of Christ, was not sufficient; the Christian needed also the interior inspiration of the Holy Spirit: "We know not how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit himself pleadeth in our behalf with unutterable groanings."<sup>5</sup>

This teaching of the Master and the Apostles will enable us to understand the prayer of the Church as it is revealed in the writings of the end of the first and the beginning of the second centuries.

### *Jewish and Christian Prayer*

If we consider the matter in general, the first thing we note is that Christian prayer resembles and echoes Jewish prayer in several ways: these resemblances appear in the Gospel canticles, the *Magnificat*, the *Benedictus*, and even in the *Lord's Prayer*.<sup>6</sup>

We find them again in the writings of the Apostolic Fathers, St. Clement, and the *Didache*. There is nothing here which should surprise a Christian: the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is also the Father of Christ; the books of the Old Testament belong to the Church, which is the true Israel. But while the Church appears to Hermas as "the first of creatures" (*Vis.*, II, 4, 1), older than Moses and the patriarchs themselves, she is also the Spouse of Christ, eternally young, and rejuvenating all she touches.

This youthfulness, which the Church receives from the Holy Spirit, appears in her prayer: we feel there a spontaneity, a freshness, and above all a joyful and assured trust which makes the

<sup>5</sup> *Rom.* viii, 26, Westminster version. Père Lagrange thus comments on this text: "This prayer is one which is powerless, which feels its powerlessness but is not ignorant of its aim; a prayer which is already that of the Christian conscious of his end, as is shown by the context. But what can one say to God to touch his heart, how approach Him, and in what dispositions? Jesus had taught this by the *Our Father*, the official prayer of the faithful, but this does not wholly dissipate the difficulty of mental prayer. Wearied by its efforts, and dissatisfied with what it finds to say, the soul says nothing definite, and it is the Spirit who prays within her."

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, p. 177; on the *Our Father*, see *Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ*, Vol. II, pp. 60-78.

traditional themes vibrate in an entirely new way. Thus, we have in the Eucharistic prayers in the *Didache*:

"We give Thee thanks, O our Father, for the holy vine of David thy servant, which Thou hast made known to us through Jesus, Thy servant.<sup>7</sup> Glory be to Thee for ever! . . . We give Thee thanks, O our Father, for the life and knowledge Thou hast made known to us through Jesus Thy servant. Glory to Thee for ever! Thine is the glory and the power, through Jesus Christ, for ever." (*Didache*, IX, 2-5.)

The blessings the Church receives from God are those asked for by the Synagogue;<sup>8</sup> but they are better understood and more firmly hoped for; the Church relies on the all powerful intercession of the Son of God, and all her prayer is transformed accordingly. This new spirit which animates the Christian soul is felt in the short exclamations of the *Didache*; we feel it also in the long prayer of Clement, and we do not possess for the period we are studying here any liturgical document comparable to this. Half a century later, St. Justin, describing the Sunday liturgy, writes: "When we have finished praying, bread is brought, with wine and water; he who presides sends up to heaven prayers and thanksgiving, according to his ability, and all the people reply by the acclamation 'Amen.'"<sup>9</sup> He who prayed thus did not create his prayer entirely; being full of the Scriptural hymns, he echoed them, as Mary did in the *Magnificat*, and Zachary in the *Benedictus*; but all these traditional themes were enriched by a new inspiration. These improvised prayers, full of Scriptural reminiscences, are our earliest liturgical documents; they were not conserved in books, and most of them have disappeared; those which have survived are all the more precious to us; such is the last prayer of St. Polycarp, transcribed above; such also the great prayer of St. Clement. Towards the end

<sup>7</sup> Here, as in many of these early documents, Jesus is called *παῖς θεοῦ*; this term signifies both "servant of God" and "Son of God."

<sup>8</sup> Thus, in this eucharistic prayer, the Christian asks "that the Church may be gathered together from the ends of the earth into thy kingdom"; this is the prayer of the Jews, but transposed by a new hope: what is hoped for is no longer the land of Israel, but heaven.

<sup>9</sup> *Apol.*, I, 67. Similarly, in the Christian meetings of the agapes, at the end of the second century and in the third, those present either sang hymns from memory or improvised them: "Post aquam manulem et lumina, ut quisque de scripturis sanctis vel de proprio ingenio potest, provocatur in medium Deo canere" (Tertullian, *Apol.*, 39). "Sonet psalmos convivium sobrium: et ubi tenax memoria est, vox canora, aggredere hoc munus ex more" (Cyprian, *Ad Donatum*, XVI). Cf. *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, p. 186.



of his letter, the bishop of Rome, after exhorting the faithful at Corinth, concludes his homily, as was his custom, by a prayer:

*Prayer of St. Clement*

May the Creator of the universe keep intact in the whole world the fixed number of His elect, through His well beloved Son Jesus Christ, through whom He has called us from darkness to light, from ignorance to the knowledge of the glory of His name, so that we may hope in Thy name, the principle whence proceeds every creature.

Thou hast opened the eyes of our hearts in order that they may know Thee, the sole Most High in the highest (heavens), the Holy in the midst of holy ones; who humblest the insolence of the proud, who destroyest the imaginations of the nations, who exaltest the humble and humblest the great, who makest rich and makest poor, who killest and savest and makest alive. Sole benefactor of spirits, and God of all flesh; who beholdest the bottom of abysses, who searchest the works of man; help of those who are in danger, saviour of those in despair, Creator and Watcher (Bishop) of all spirits. Who multiplieth the nations on the earth, and hast chosen in the midst of all, those who love Thee, through Jesus Christ Thy well beloved Son, by whom Thou hast instructed, sanctified and honoured us.

We pray Thee, O Master, be our help and our support. Save us who are oppressed, take pity on the humble, raise up those who have fallen, show Thyself to those who are in want, heal the sick, bring back those who have wandered from Thy people, feed the hungry, free our prisoners, restore those who languish, console the fearful; let all peoples know that Thou art the only God, that Jesus Christ is Thy Son, that we are Thy people and the sheep of Thy fold.

For Thou by Thy works hast manifested the everlasting constitution of the world. Thou, O Lord, hast created the earth, Thou who art faithful in all generations, just in Thy judgments, wonderful in Thy power and magnificence, Thou who createst with wisdom, and establishest with prudence what Thou hast created, Thou who art good in things visible, and faithful towards those who trust in Thee, merciful and compassionate, forgive us our sins and our injustices, our falls and our wanderings. Reckon not up the sins of Thy servants, but purify us by Thy truth, and direct our steps so that we may walk in holiness of heart and do that which is good and acceptable in Thine eyes and in the eyes of our governors. Yea, Master, make Thy face to shine upon us, so we may enjoy good things in peace; cover us with Thy mighty hand, deliver us from all sin by Thy strong arm, save us from those who hate us unjustly. Give concord and peace to us and to all the inhabitants of the

earth, as Thou didst give it to our fathers when they called upon Thee reverently in faith and truth, so that we may be subject to the supreme power and excellence of Thy name, to our governors, and to those who rule us on earth.

Thou, O Master, hast given them the royal power, through Thy magnificent and unspeakable might, so that, knowing the glory and honour which Thou hast given them, we may be subject to them and may not oppose Thy will. Grant them, O Lord, health, peace, concord, stability, so that they may exercise without hindrance the sovereignty Thou hast entrusted to them. For Thou, O Master, heavenly king of ages, givest to the sons of men glory, honour and power over the things of the earth. Direct Thyself, O Lord, their counsel, according to that which is good and acceptable in Thy sight, so that, exercising piously, in peace and meekness, the power Thou hast entrusted to them, they may find Thee propitious.

Thou alone hast the power to do this, and to give us still greater blessings; we praise Thee through the High Priest and Protector of our souls, Jesus Christ, through whom be glory and greatness to Thee, now and from generation to generation, and for ever and ever, Amen" (ch. LIX-LXI).

In this prayer, so similar in many features to Jewish prayers, we already perceive the traditional characteristics which will mark the Christian liturgy;<sup>10</sup> we find them also in other parts of this letter, which also have the tone of the primitive liturgy, and which are already related to the liturgies of the fourth century, as for instance to the prayers of the *Apostolic Constitutions*.<sup>11</sup>

This permanence in liturgical characteristics confirms what we said about the composition of these prayers; they were improvised by the bishop, but on a traditional theme, nourished with memories of the psalms, prophets, Gospels, and apostolic writings.

<sup>10</sup> Duchesne, *Origines du culte chrétien*, 1920, p. 55: "It is sufficient to remark that the liturgical language of which St. Clement gives us so early and authoritative an example, and the ritual presented by St. Justin as generally used in Christian assemblies, are altogether similar to those we shall meet with three centuries later, in a time when documents are plentiful. On the contrary, the liturgy described in the *Didache* has all the appearance of an anomaly; it will provide a few features for later compositions, but on the whole it is outside the stream of the general line of development, both for the ritual and for the style."

<sup>11</sup> Such are ch. XX, XXXIII, XXXIV in the letter of Clement; they may be compared with the prayer of thanksgiving found in the liturgy of baptism (*Const. Apost.*, VII, 34) and the anaphora (*ibid.*, VIII, 12, 9 *et seq.*). Cf. *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 256-260.

*Prayers to the Father and to Christ*

It is to the Heavenly Father that liturgical prayer is usually addressed: the Church follows in this matter the teaching and example of her Master, as set forth in the *Our Father* and in the sacerdotal prayer of Christ (*John* xvii). This prayer is addressed to the Father in the name of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, through His intercession, and through His ministry as High Priest.<sup>12</sup> These features are manifest in the prayer of Clement; they similarly appear in most of the documents of this time. But it would be a mistake to see in this liturgical usage an absolute rule, or to regard prayers addressed to Christ as merely late deviations, or alterations of the primitive liturgy. To Christ are addressed the earliest hymns we possess: the morning hymn, and the evening hymn;<sup>13</sup> about the year 113, at the beginning of the second century, Pliny in his letter to Trajan thus describes Christian worship: "The Christians are accustomed to meet together on certain days before dawn, and to sing in alternating ranks hymns in honour of Christ."<sup>14</sup>

We can go still further back, and read once more in the *Apocalypse* the heavenly canticles which are in the epistles of St. Paul echoed by voices on earth:

"The Lamb that was slain is worthy to receive power, and divinity, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and benediction" (*Apocalypse*, V, 12).

"Rise thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall enlighten thee" (*Ephes.*, V, 14).

"Great is the mystery of godliness,  
which was manifested in the flesh,  
was justified in the spirit,

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 175 et seq.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 220-222; the morning hymn is the *Gloria in excelsis*, which we sing in the Mass; in its primitive form this is a hymn to Christ. Cf. *Recherches de Science religieuse*, 1923, pp. 322-329; D. Casel, in *Theol. Revue*, 1927, col. 64. The evening hymn in the *φῶς ἱλαρόν*: "Joyous light of the holy and immortal glory of the heavenly Father, holy and blessed Jesus Christ. The hour of sunset has come, and seeing the evening star appear, we sing of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit of God. Thou art worthy at all times to be praised by holy voices, O Son of God, who givest life; therefore the world glorifies thee." Cf. E. Smothers, in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, 1929, pp. 266-283.

<sup>14</sup> Pliny the Younger, *Epist.*, X, 96.

appeared unto angels,  
hath been preached unto the Gentiles,  
is believed in the world,  
is taken up in glory."

(1 Tim., iii, 16)

### *The Eucharistic Liturgy*

What thus appears in Christian worship as a whole is still more manifest in the heart of the liturgy, that is, in the celebration of the Eucharistic mystery.

It is to the Father that the Eucharistic Sacrifice is offered; the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord, is the priest and the victim. The earliest Eucharistic prayers we possess are those found in the *Didache* (IX-X):

"As to the Eucharist, give thanks thus:

"First for the chalice: We give Thee thanks, O our Father, for the holy Vine of David Thy servant, which Thou hast made known to us through Jesus Thy servant. Glory be to Thee for ever!

"For the broken bread: We give Thee thanks, O our Father, for the life and knowledge Thou hast made known to us through Jesus Thy servant. Glory be to Thee for ever.

"As the elements of this bread, scattered upon the mountains, have been gathered together to become one whole, so also may Thy Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into thy Kingdom. For Thine is the glory and power, through Jesus Christ, for ever.

"After you have been filled, give thanks thus:

"We give Thee thanks, O holy Father, for Thy holy name which Thou hast made to dwell in our hearts, and for the knowledge, faith and immortality which Thou hast revealed to us through Jesus Thy servant. Glory be to Thee for ever.

"Thou, O almighty Master, hast created the universe for the glory of Thy name, and hast given to men food and drink, that they may enjoy them and give Thee thanks; but to us Thou hast given spiritual food and drink, and eternal life through Thy servant. Above all we give Thee thanks because Thou art mighty. Glory be to Thee for ever!

"Remember, O Lord, to deliver Thy Church from all evil and to make it perfect in Thy love. Gather it together from the four winds, this holy Church, into Thy Kingdom which Thou hast prepared for it. For Thine is the power and the glory for ever.

"May grace come, and this world pass away. Hosanna to the God of

David. If any one be holy, let him come. If he is not, let him repent. Maranatha! Amen.”<sup>15</sup>

In this text, if we leave provisionally on one side the acclamations and the final monitions, we can distinguish two chants, each of three strophes: each of the two first strophes ends in a short doxology: “Glory be to Thee . . .,” and the whole chant by a fuller doxology: “For Thine is the glory . . .” The first chant precedes the communion, the second follows it. These prayers call to mind in more than one feature Jewish prayers, but they are inspired above all by the New Testament, and chiefly by the Johannine and Pauline writings.

These prayers have left little trace in later liturgical tradition. It is quite otherwise with the acclamations and the final monitions. We read, for instance, in the *Apostolic Constitutions*, VIII, 13, 12-14:

“The bishop, addressing the people, says: ‘Holy things to the holy!’ And all the people reply: ‘One only holy, one only Lord, Jesus Christ . . . Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord. God is Lord, and He has appeared amongst us. Hosanna in the highest.’ And after that, the bishop communicates, and then the priests and the deacons. . . .”

In this fourth century text we find in a more developed form the same liturgical elements found in the *Didache*: monitions to the faithful, acclamations in honour of the Son of David who comes among his people.

The author of the *Didache* ends by saying:

“As to the prophets, let these give thanks as much as they will.”

### *The Eucharistic Liturgy according to St. Justin*

Half a century later, a text of an entirely different character makes known to us, not now the eucharistic prayers, but the Christian mystery: the apologist St. Justin, in order to refute pagan calumnies, gives the emperors Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus a description of the Mass as Christians celebrated it; he does this on

<sup>15</sup> These prayers have often been studied: by the editors of the *Didache*, and also by J. A. Robinson, *Barnabas, Hermas and the Didache*, London, 1920, pp. 94-97; *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 193-195, Lietzmann, *Messe und Herrenmahl*, pp. 230-238.

two occasions, explaining first the baptismal liturgy, and then the Sunday Mass. We reproduce here the first text, which is the more explicit:

“LXV. When we have washed the one who has made a profession of faith and who has become one of us, we lead him to the place where are assembled those whom we call our brethren. Together we make fervent prayers for ourselves, for the baptised, and for all others in whatsoever place they may be, in order to obtain, after the knowledge of the truth, the grace to practise virtue and to keep the commandments, that we may arrive at eternal salvation. When the prayers are concluded, we give to each other the kiss of peace. Then one brings to him who presides over the assembly of the brethren, bread, and a cup of wine and water. He takes them, and praises and glorifies the Father of the universe through the name of the Son and the Holy Spirit, and he makes a long thanksgiving (‘eucharist’) for these good things that we have received from Him. When he has finished the prayers and the thanksgiving, all the people present reply by the acclamation: Amen. ‘Amen’ signifies in the Hebrew language ‘So may it be.’ When he who presides has made the thanksgiving, and all the people have replied, the ministers whom we call deacons distribute the consecrated bread and wine to all those present, and they take some to the absent.

“LXVI. We call this food ‘eucharist,’ and none may partake of it if he believes not in the truth of our doctrine, has not received the washing for the forgiveness of sins and regeneration, and lives not according to the precepts of Christ. For we do not take this food as common bread and common drink, but just as our Saviour Jesus Christ, incarnate by the power of the Word of God, took flesh and blood for our salvation, so the food consecrated by the prayer formed of the words of Christ, this food which is to nourish our blood and our flesh by being assimilated, is the flesh and blood of the incarnate Jesus: such is our teaching. For the apostles, in their memoirs called Gospels, report that Jesus gave them these instructions: he took bread, and having given thanks, said: ‘Do this in memory of me, this is my body’; he likewise took the cup, and having given thanks he said: ‘This is my blood’; and he gave it to them only. This the evil spirits have imitated by instituting the mysteries of Mithra; for you know, or may know, bread and a cup of water are given in the ceremonies of initiation, and certain formulæ are pronounced.”

This description of the baptismal Mass is followed by a chapter dealing with the liturgy of Sunday. It is shorter, but in some details it completes the one we have just read:

“LXVII, 3. On the day called Sunday, all, in town or country, gather together in one and the same place; the memoirs of the apostles and the

writings of the prophets are read, as much as the time will permit. When the reader has finished, he who presides gives a discourse, to instruct, and to encourage the imitation of these beautiful teachings. Then we all rise up together and pray. Next, as we have said above, when we have finished praying, bread, wine and water are brought; he who presides sends up to heaven prayers and thanksgivings as much as he is able, and all the people reply by the acclamation: Amen. Then takes place the distribution and partaking of each of the things consecrated, and their sending to the absent by the ministry of the deacons."

This important text suggests to a historian many useful points. What we infer from it in the first place is that the discipline of the secret was not yet enforced: we shall find it at the end of this second century in Tertullian, but Justin shows no knowledge of it. He expounds to the pagans the eucharistic liturgy and the Christian belief in the presence of the body of Christ: this intention to hide nothing is clearly inspired by the desire to refute calumnies, and indeed this exposition was the most effective of apologies.<sup>16</sup>

### *Origin and Development of this Liturgy*

This frank description enables us to reconstitute, at least in its general features, the primitive liturgy. In presence of all the assembled Christians, there were read first "the memoirs of the apostles and the writings of the prophets." The Synagogue service comprised two readings from holy Scripture; the first was taken from the Pentateuch, and the second from the prophets. We find similarly two readings in the Christian liturgy, but one is from the New Testament, and the other from the Old.<sup>17</sup>

In the case of the Jews, these Scriptural readings were followed by a homily; the same takes place in the Christian liturgy. After

<sup>16</sup> It is evident that the reception of the Eucharist is reserved to believers, as it will be always; Justin says so explicitly (LXVI, 1), and so also the *Didache*, IX, 5. It is supported by the words of the Lord (*Matt.* vii, 6), on which will later be based the law of the secret (Tertullian, *De præscr.*, XLI, 2). But though the pagans have not the right to receive the Eucharist, they have a right to know the rite and the mystery.

<sup>17</sup> Of the New Testament, Justin mentions here only the Gospels; but the epistles were equally read; we see even from the letter of Dionysius of Corinth (cf. *supra*, p. 410, n. 6) that the letter of Clement of Rome and that of Soter were read at Corinth during the Sunday office. Of the Old Testament, the prophets were chiefly read by Christians, because they gave a more evident testimony to Christ, but the veneration felt for them did not lead the Pentateuch to be overlooked, or the Psalms.

the homily, all those present rise for common prayer; the letter of St. Clement shows us how the bishop passed from exhortation to prayer, leading all his people.

Readings, homily and prayers together form only a preparatory liturgy. When they are ended, the Eucharist commences: bread, wine and water are brought, then "he who presides sends up to heaven prayers and thanksgivings ('eucharists') as much as he can"; there is as yet no eucharistic form officially adopted by the Church and imposed by her upon bishops and priests; the officiant improvises the form of this prayer, and continues it "as much as he can."<sup>18</sup> At the same time, this eucharistic prayer develops according to a liturgical theme; it praises the blessings received from God, creation, redemption, and above all the mysteries of the life of Christ; it stresses the Supper, and repeats the words of consecration, which Justin explicitly sets forth; it recalls the death and resurrection of the Lord; it prays for the Church and the faithful; and ends with a doxology. Such is the theme which we shall find developed at the beginning of the third century in the anaphora of St. Hippolytus; that liturgy displays in more than one point the personal impress of its author, but it was not wholly created by him; it was the codification of a previous usage, the terminus of a long tradition.<sup>19</sup>

After the anaphora, the Communion is distributed to those present and carried to the absent. It is at this moment, immediately before the Communion, that we find in many early liturgies the acclamations which we have already read in the *Didache*; we also find, but more rarely, eucharistic prayers expressing the desire of the believer; thus in the *Acts of Thomas*:

"O Jesus, who hast given us the grace of being participants in the Eucharist of Thy holy body and Thy blood, behold we dare to approach Thy Eucharist, and to invoke Thy holy name. Come and communicate unto us."<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> We have seen a similar expression in the *Didache*, X, 7: "Let the prophets give thanks as much as they wish."

<sup>19</sup> On this anaphora, cf. the next book.

<sup>20</sup> *Acts of Thomas*, XLIX. The long eucharistic prayer which follows (ch. L) is clearly of Gnostic origin; the text transcribed above would seem not to come from a Gnostic source (cf. W. Bauer in the collection of *N. T. Apokryphen* of E. Hennecke, 1923, p. 257); but the whole book is too suspect in origin and character to be presented with full assurance as an authentic witness of the Catholic faith.



To these sentiments of adoration and love were often joined, especially from the fourth century, sentiments of reverential fear in presence of the majesty of the eucharistic mystery.<sup>21</sup>

### *The Baptismal Liturgy*

In this passage of St. Justin, we have so far considered the testimony it gives to the eucharistic liturgy, and it is this that gives it its chief interest. But we must also notice the baptismal liturgy; it appears as a solemn rite in which the whole Church takes part. We are no longer in the very beginnings, which the *Didache* showed us: baptism is no longer conferred as it was then, with such means as circumstances permitted; the Church has constructed piscinas for the use of its neophytes; but first of all, before the baptism, there is a profession of faith followed by prayers and fasts in which all the faithful join; <sup>22</sup> then the neophytes "are conducted by us to the place where the water is, and there, in the same way that we ourselves were regenerated, they are regenerated in their turn; for it is in the name of the Father and Master of the universe, and of Jesus Christ our Lord, and of the Holy Spirit that they are then washed in the water." <sup>23</sup>

At the end of this chapter, Justin returns once more to the baptismal initiation. A little later on, St. Irenæus once more sets forth the baptismal rite in his *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*:

"When we are regenerated by the baptism given to us in the name of the three Persons, we are enriched in this second birth with the good things which are in God the Father by means of His Son, with the Holy Spirit. For those who are baptised receive the Spirit of God, who gives them to the Word, that is, to the Son; and the Son takes and offers them

<sup>21</sup> These sentiments are very marked in St. Cyril of Jerusalem (*Cat. myst.*, V, 4, Migne, P. G., XXXIII, 1112, cf. 1116), and still more in St. John Chrysostom; on the other hand, we do not find them in the Cappadocian Fathers. There is a like difference in the liturgies; these sentiments do not appear in the Anaphora of Serapion, nor in the *Apostolic Constitutions*; on the other hand they are very marked in the liturgy of St. James, somewhat less, but still very noticeable, in that of St. Basil and of St. John Chrysostom. Cf. Dom. Connolly, *Fear and Awe attaching to the Eucharistic Service, Texts and Studies*, VIII, pp. 92-97; Nicolas Cabasilas, *Liturgiæ expositio*, I (Migne, P. G., CL, 369).

<sup>22</sup> Justin, *Apol.*, I, 61, 2.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

to His Father, and the Father communicates to them incorruptibility. Thus without the Spirit one cannot see the Word of God; and without the Son none can arrive at the Father; for the knowledge of the Father is the Son, and the knowledge of the Son of God is obtained by means of the Holy Spirit; but it is the Son who, by office, distributes the Spirit according to the good pleasure of the Father, to those whom the Father wishes, and as the Father wishes.<sup>24</sup>

We see from this fine passage that the baptismal formula prescribed by Christ, "baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," was not only faithfully repeated, but it planted in the hearts of the faithful belief in the Trinity, and the rite which accompanied the formula again stressed its significance: for the neophyte was washed three times, either by immersion or by infusion.<sup>25</sup>

On coming out of the baptismal piscina, the neophytes were conducted to the assembly of the faithful, and then came common prayers, and the kiss of peace. In the course of the second and third centuries, the catechumenate took shape; the baptismal liturgy, reserved for the vigils of Easter and Pentecost, became more solemn; but already in the first half of the second century its essential features were already fixed, and then more than ever its social bearing was felt. At that time, when persecutions unceasingly threatened the Church and martyrdoms were common, the entrance of the neophyte into the Christian community was a heroic step, and one marked by a fraternal charity the striking fervour of which people loved to recall later on. In the following century, towards the end of a long period of peace, Origen will call up these memories in one of his homilies:

"If we judge things according to truth . . . we must recognise that we are not faithful. Then people were truly faithful, when martyrdom came at our birth (into the Church); when, returning from the cemeteries whither we had accompanied the bodies of the martyrs, we re-entered the assemblies, when the whole Church was there, unshakeable,

<sup>24</sup> *Demonstr.*, ch. vii, cf. ch. iii.

<sup>25</sup> The triple infusion is prescribed in the *Didache*, ch. VII. Triple immersion is explicitly attested by Tertullian, *Adv. Praxeam.*, xxvi: "Nec semel, sed ter, ad singula nomina in personas singulas tingimur." We see also from this chapter that the Monarchian heretics, who had abandoned belief in the Trinity, still had a triple immersion; this proves that they had received this from the custom of the Church, previous to their heresy. Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 134-141.

when the catechumens were catechised in the midst of the martyrdoms and deaths of Christians who confessed the truth to the end, and when these catechumens, surmounting these tests, attached themselves without fear to the living God. Then we were aware of having known astonishing and wonderful marvels. Then the faithful were few in number, doubtless, but they were really faithful, treading the straight and narrow way which leads to life." <sup>28</sup>

## § 7. THE APOSTLES' CREED <sup>1</sup>

The study of the baptismal liturgy has shown us that in the history of Christian doctrine and particularly of the dogma of the Trinity, the formulæ and rites of baptism played a most important part: they were the expression and the safeguard of the dogma; this is true especially of the baptismal creed, which we must study more closely.

### *Profession of Faith in Apostolic Times*

Already in apostolic times, neophytes were admitted to baptism only after a profession of faith.<sup>2</sup> Philip the deacon required it already from the Ethiopian eunuch (*Acts viii, 37*); St. Paul required it from all his converts: they had to confess with the mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe with the heart that God raised Him up from the dead (*Rom. x, 9*); all the candidates for baptism had to accept the traditional catechesis as we find it recalled, for example, in the first epistle to the Corinthians (*I Cor., XV, 3 et seq.*).

The faith proposed by the Church to the neophytes and professed by them was thus the faith of the apostles, which the apos-

<sup>28</sup> *Hom. in Jerem.*, IV, 3; ed. Klostermann, p. 25; Migne, *P.G.*, XIII, p. 288-289.

<sup>1</sup> The most detailed study of the history of the Apostles' Creed is that of F. Kattenbusch, *Das Apostolische Symbol*, Leipzig, 1894-1900. The texts are conveniently collected together in A. Hahn, *Bibliothek der Symbole*, Breslau, 1897. Research and hypotheses have been multiplied in recent years. We mention above all J. Haussleiter, *Trinitarischer Glaube und Christusbekenntnis*, Gütersloh, 1920; A. Nussbaymer, *Das Ursymbolum nach der Epideixis des hl. Irenæus und dem Dialog. Justins*, Paderborn, 1921; H. Lietzmann, *Symbolstudien*, articles published in *Zeitschr. f. N. T. Wissensch.*, 1922-1927; Dom B. Capelle, *Le Symbole romain au IIe siècle*, in *Recherches de Théol. anc. et méd.*, Vol. II, 1930, pp. 5-20; Lebreton, *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 141-173; *Les origines du symbole baptismal*, in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, 1930, pp. 97-124.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 342.

tles themselves had received from Christ. This is brought out into full light by Tertullian, in his treatise *De præscriptione contra hæreticos*. After transcribing in its entirety the "rule of faith," he adds:

"Such is the rule which Christ instituted—as I will prove—and it can give rise to no questions amongst us other than those raised by heresies and heretics" (ch. xiii).

A little later he links up this baptismal creed with the formula of baptism, and shows that this teaching of Christ was entrusted by him to the apostles, who in their turn taught it to the Church; thus is assured the chain of tradition which links us through the Church to the apostles, through the apostles to Christ, and through Christ to God.<sup>3</sup>

We cannot infer from this that this teaching communicated by Christ to the apostles must, according to Tertullian, consist in the formula of the Creed, but it remains true that this Christian and apostolic faith has its "rule" in the baptismal creed, and that this creed is based on the baptismal formula which Christ prescribed; this is what Tertullian himself teaches when, speaking of the replies given by the neophyte to the baptismal questions, he writes: "We reply by a formula somewhat longer than that which the Lord gave us in the Gospel" (*De Corona*, iii).

We have here not only theological theses of great importance, but also some fruitful historical statements. The Christian liturgy was determined by the initiative of Christ; the whole anaphora is based on the narrative of the Institution and on the words of the Lord, "This is My body . . . this is My blood . . . do this in memory of Me." Similarly the baptismal liturgy is determined by the commandment of Jesus: "Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." By repeating these words over the head of the baptized person, the Church consecrates him to the God whom Jesus Christ has revealed

<sup>3</sup> "One of the apostles having been expelled, He commanded the eleven others . . . to go and teach the nations and to baptize them in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. . . . It was in Judea that they first established the faith in Jesus Christ and founded churches; then they set out across the world, and announced to the nations the same doctrine and the same faith" (XX, 3-4). "It is clear that every doctrine which is in agreement with that of these churches, mothers and sources of the faith, must be regarded as true, since it evidently contains that which these churches received from the apostles, the apostles from Christ, and Christ from God" (XXI, 4).

to us; she at the same time calls upon the neophyte to consecrate himself to God, and to make an act of faith in Him.

### *The Baptismal Creed*

For a long time, until after the middle of the second century, we shall not as yet find a liturgical formula imposed authoritatively in the name of the Church: this conclusion, to which we are led by the study of the eucharistic liturgy, is also suggested to us by the study of the baptismal liturgy, and in particular of the Creed; but at the same time we note in the Creed as in the anaphora, through the accidental variations of a still plastic formula, the affirmation of the same dogma: the Creed, basing itself on the baptismal formula, confesses God in three Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The earliest forms of the Creed are very short; the *Epistle of the Apostles*, a Christian apocryphal work written about 180, gives us this formula:

I believe in the Father Almighty,  
in Jesus Christ our Saviour,  
and in the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete;  
in the Holy Church, in the forgiveness of sins.<sup>4</sup>

The papyrus of Der-Balizeh, which contains an Egyptian ritual of the end of the second century, presents the following text:

I believe in God the Father Almighty,  
and in His only Son Our Lord Jesus Christ,  
and in the Holy Spirit;  
in the resurrection of the flesh, in the holy Catholic Church.<sup>5</sup>

About the same date, or a little later, we find more developed texts, as for instance, this of St. Irenæus:

The Church, although spread throughout the universe as far as the ends of the earth, has received from the apostles and their disciples the faith in one God, the Father Almighty, who made heaven and earth and the seas, and all that is in them; and in one only Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who was incarnate for our salvation; and in one Holy Spirit, who through the prophets announced the dispensation, the coming, the virginal birth, the passion, the resurrection from the dead, and the bodily

<sup>4</sup> Cf. C. Schmidt, *Gespräche Jesu mit seinen Jüngern.*, p. 32; cf. p. 400.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. B. Capelle, *art. cit.*, p. 6.

ascension into heaven of the well beloved Christ Jesus Our Lord, and His second coming, when in the heavens He will appear at the right hand of the Father, to restore all things and to raise up all flesh and all humanity, in order that before Christ Jesus Our Lord, God, Saviour and King, every knee may bend in heaven, hell, on earth, and every tongue confess Him, and He may give to all a just judgment. . . .<sup>6</sup>

This statement is not a literal transcription but a brief commentary on the Creed; at the same time it must be noted that this commentary is wholly formed of traditional formulæ which will remain living in tradition.<sup>7</sup>

Before appearing here in Irenæus, these expressions were familiar to Barnabas, and Justin; they will be more familiar still to Hippolytus and Tertullian; we shall find them again in the *Apostolic Constitutions*, the Creeds of Antioch, Cæsarea, Jerusalem and Sirmium. We see by this example how liturgical usage came to be formed, and how in turn it reacted on theological literature, passing on to it its formulæ and giving a priestly and solemn character to its style.

These precisions which tend to determine still further the formula of faith will multiply in the course of the centuries; to the denials of heresy the Church will oppose the professions of faith in her Creeds; against Arius, Nestorius, Eutyches, and all the teachers of error she will define ever more and more explicitly the dogmas she sets forth to her faithful. This is apparent to us already in the second century in Tertullian, Irenæus, and in the first years of the century, in Ignatius of Antioch:

Shut your ears, then, to the speech of those who do not speak to you of Jesus Christ, born of the race of David, born of Mary, who was really generated, really ate and drank, really suffered persecution under Pontius Pilate, was really crucified and died, in the sight of heaven, earth, and the lower regions; who was really raised up from the dead. . . .<sup>8</sup>

We find in this fragment some formulæ already traditional, and which are echoed in the majority of the Creeds, in particular the passion, dated under Pontius Pilate, the crucifixion, death, and resurrection. Ignatius had to oppose those who taught Docetism;

<sup>6</sup> *Adv. hæres.*, I, 10, 2. Cf. *Demonstr.*, c. VI, quoted and commented on in *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, p. 152, and *Recherches de Science Religieuse*, 1930, p. 102.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Lietzmann, *Zeitschr. f. N. T. Wiss.*, XXVI (1927), p. 93.

<sup>8</sup> *Trall.*, IX; cf. *Smyrn.*, I; *Magn.* XI.

he set against them these great facts of the life of Christ, and stressed with energy their reality.

These progressive precisions of the Creed affect Christology above all: to the profession of faith in the Trinity is added the profession of faith in the principal mysteries of the life of Christ.<sup>9</sup>

### *The Roman Creed*

If we wish to sum up this account, and to separate it from the hypotheses and discussions which weigh it down, we can reduce it to these main points. After the formulæ of faith of the apostolic age, we find at Rome from the first half of the second century a baptismal creed professing faith in God the Father Almighty, in Jesus Christ His Son, and in the Holy Spirit; the mention of the Holy Spirit was followed by those of the Holy Church and the resurrection of the flesh.

This brief formula, similar to those we have mentioned above,<sup>10</sup> is enriched from the time of St. Justin with a profession of faith in the principal mysteries of the life of Christ. The Christological formulæ, joined sometimes to the third article,<sup>11</sup> will find their definitive place in the second article, as is natural. Thus from the end of the second century or the first years of the third, the Creed will be subject only to a few literary retouches of little or no importance.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>9</sup> This Christology has not the same place in the different creeds of the second century: in the text of Irenæus quoted above (*Hær.*, I, 10, 2) it is joined to the third article of the Creed, which has as its subject the Holy Spirit; so also in St. Justin, *Apol.* I, LXI, 10-13. On the other hand, in the *Demonstration* of St. Irenæus, c. vi, it occupies in the second article the place which it will henceforth retain in the Creed. From this fact it is not unreasonably inferred that the Christological formulæ, first of all isolated, took their definitive place in the Trinitarian symbol only towards the end of the second century. Cf. *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 160 *et seq.*, *Recherches de Science Religieuse*, 1930, p. 107 *et seq.*

<sup>10</sup> Cf. *supra*, pp. 471-472.

<sup>11</sup> As we have seen from the texts of Justin and Irenæus, this position is due to the mention of the prophecies: to the prophetic Spirit is joined all these mysteries which it foretold.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Dom Capelle, *Rech.*, p. 19. The same author, speaking of the texts of Tertullian and Hippolytus, reconstitutes thus the Roman creed of the last years of the second century (*Revue bénédictine*, 1927, p. 39):

"I believe in one God almighty, creator of all things,

"And in Christ Jesus, the Son of God, born of the Holy Spirit and of the Virgin Mary, crucified under Pontius Pilate, dead and buried; raised from

In this progressive elaboration of the baptismal creed, the part played by the Church of Rome was decisive;<sup>13</sup> it was she above all who assured throughout the whole Christian world that unanimity of faith which St. Irenæus attested towards the end of the second century with such force:

"It is this preaching that the Church has received, this faith, as we have said; and although she is scattered through the whole world, she keeps it carefully, as if she dwelt in one single house, and she believes it unanimously, as if she had but one soul and one heart, and with perfect accord she preaches it, teaches it, and transmits it, as though she had only one mouth. Doubtless the languages on the surface of the world are different, but the force of tradition is one and the same. The churches founded in the Germanies have not another faith or another tradition; nor the churches founded amongst the Iberians, or the Celts, or in the East, or in Egypt, or in Lybia, or in the centre of the world; but just as the sun, that creature of God, is one and the same in all the world, so also the preaching of the truth shines everywhere and enlightens all men who wish to come to know it" (*Adv. hæc.*, I, 10, 2).

### *The Rule of Faith*

What assures this uniformity in the teaching of the Church is above all the living magisterium which conserves, transmits and develops the deposit received from Christ and the apostles; but this living magisterium utilises the Creed in order to express its faith and to give it the official formulation which maintains all its force, which opposes it to error, and which determines for all people and all time its immutable doctrine. When the Arian heresy will arise, the Church gathered together in council at Nicæa will define its faith in a Creed; she will not create it entirely; she will base herself on a baptismal Creed, contenting herself with adding to it some new precisions aimed at the new heresy.

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the dead the third day; ascended into heaven; seated at the right hand of the Father; who will come to judge the living and the dead;

"And in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Church, the resurrection of the flesh."

For some details, this reconstitution is conjectural: thus the omission of the word "Father" in the first article seems insufficiently guaranteed in view of the texts of Tertullian (*De bapt.*, VI, *Adv. Prax.*, II) and of Hippolytus (Capelle, p. 36). On the other hand, the omission of "the forgiveness of sins" in the third article seems well established (p. 42).

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Kattenbusch, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 80 (dependence of the other Western creeds); Vol. I, p. 380 *et seq.* (dependence of the Eastern creeds).



During the three centuries which precede Nicæa, there was no universal council; the Church had nevertheless to conquer many heresies: Gnosticism, Marcionism, Monarchianism, Modalism; it opposed to these not conciliar definitions, but the baptismal creed, the solemn expression of the apostolic faith. This faith, sworn to by the Christian at baptism, is his most precious treasure, and at the same time his password, or *tessera*, which will lead to his being recognised everywhere as a son of the Catholic Church, and as one of Christ's faithful. He may, like St. Irenæus, be born and grow up at Smyrna, live in Rome, and evangelise the Gauls: he will find everywhere the same faith, and will be everywhere illumined by the same sun of God.

# ECCLESIASTICAL ORGANISATION IN THE FIRST TWO CENTURIES<sup>1</sup>

IN THE conditions, apparently so precarious, in which the Church found itself in the Roman Empire in the first two centuries, what was its organisation?

## § I. THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH

### *Charity and Fraternity*

The Church is an organic collectivity, and not a mere juxtaposition of men thinking and acting in the same way on certain points regarded by them as fundamental; there is a bond uniting them which makes them a society with an externally visible organisation.

Yet in the very earliest days, this organisation shows itself only in a few somewhat ill-defined features. The Church, the society of the friends of Christ, that is, of those who love Him and are loved by Him, and who for love of Him love one another, form above all a brotherhood and a "charity," ἀγάπη. This is the term of St. Ignatius of Antioch,<sup>2</sup> who was indeed a man consumed by the love of God and of men's souls for God's sake. This charity is inseparable from unity: if this unity does not yet find its explicit expression in certain organs having its maintenance and manifestation for their special function, primitive Christianity has nevertheless a passion

<sup>1</sup> Bibliography.—Besides the works indicated in the General Bibliography, one may consult for the matters treated in this chapter: A. Michiels, *L'origine de l'épiscopat*, Louvain, 1900; C. De Smedt, *L'organisation des églises chrétiennes jusqu'au milieu du IIIe siècle, 1re partie*, in *Revue des questions historiques*, 1888, pp. 329-384; J. Zeiller, *La conception de l'Eglise aux quatre premiers siècles*, in *Revue d'histoire ecclési.*, Vol. XXIX, 1933, pp. 571-585 and 827-848; Bartoli, *The Primitive Church and the Primacy of Rome*, London, 1909; F. Mourret, *La Papauté* (*Bibliothèque des Sciences religieuses*, Paris, 1929); E. Caspar, *Die römische Bischofsliste*, in *Schriften der Königsberger Gelehrten Gesellschaft Geisteswissenschaftliche Klasse*, 2. Jahr. Heft 4, 1926, and *Geschichte des Papsttums*, Vol. I, Tübingen, 1930, the theories in which are discussed below: F. X. Seppelt, *Der Aufstieg des Papsttums. Geschichte der Päpste des von Anfangen bis zum Regierungsantritt Gregors des Grossen*, Leipzig, 1931; J. Turmel, *Histoire du Dogme de la Papauté des origines à la fin du IVe siècle*, Paris, 1908.

<sup>2</sup> *Epistola ad Romanos*, inscr.

for deep unity, inseparable in fact from the existence of a hierarchy;<sup>3</sup> the *ἀγάπη* is a consensus, the realisation itself of the *sint unum* which is the object of the prayer of Christ in the Gospel of St. John.<sup>4</sup>

The sense, will, and consciousness of this unity shine forth in the letters of St. Ignatius, which make us realise so well that all the churches are but one, and that all Christians make only one single body, or better, one soul. But this unity is not merely imposed by a commandment. It remains essentially based on charity, it is the fruit of the union of those who love one another, as well as one of the reasons for this love; they love one another because they are all one, and they are one because they love one another, Christ being the bond of this unity and the centre of this love.

### Unity

Being one single body throughout the world in which they are scattered, not a federation of distinct groups but the one society of Christ's faithful spread in many places, they constitute one single whole in each place. The Christian community in each city—for Christianity shows itself as a religion of cities and not one of corporations—appears as one whole which is not at first divisible into various sections. "From the first generation, wherever it was established, and for instance in a great city such as Antioch or Rome, Christianity did not constitute synagogues distinct from one another, as," it seems, at least in the absence of proof, and in spite of certain contrary theories,<sup>5</sup> "the synagogues of the Jews were in Rome, nor did it constitute autonomous colleges, such as the pagan *collegia*. It had as its meeting place the house of some particular Christian. All the Christians of the city, however great it may have been, formed one single confraternity or *ἐκκλησία*, which bore the name of this city. A cult like that of Mithra developed by cells or brotherhoods, dividing up regularly when the number of the devotees of the god increased: the law of Christianity, a law which was constant long before the principle of the monarchical episcopate was everywhere in force, was that there is only one church in each

<sup>3</sup> On the infant church as a hierarchical society, as shown in the Gospels, Acts and St. Paul cf. above, p. 346 *et seq.*

<sup>4</sup> xvii, 11.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Bk. I, pp. 33-34.

city, and similarly, that no church in the world is isolated from the others.”<sup>6</sup>

Nevertheless, each church lived its own life, without any regular intervention by the action of directing centres through clearly defined organs. Intercommunion for a long time manifested itself above all by the exchange of letters, just as, in the quite primitive time, the great founders of churches, Peter, Paul or John, had assured the nascent tradition and the unity of minds by their letters to so many churches in Asia, Macedonia, Greece or Italy. The letters of Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch, Polycarp of Smyrna, and of the Church of Lyons after the tragedy of 177, played a similar part in the general life of the Church.

## § 2. THE EPISCOPATE AND THE PRESBYTERATE

### *The Origins of the Episcopate*

But each community, however simple it may have been in constitution in the primitive period, had from the first the essential elements of a real organisation. A council of presbyters or elders governed it, subordinated, in the apostolic period, to the apostle-founder, or his representatives, who were at first itinerant.<sup>1</sup> The fixation of this superior authority is the beginning of the episcopate such as we know it. This is distinctly found quite early in many places. It is evident at Jerusalem from the beginning in the episcopate of James;<sup>2</sup> we find it in Crete with Titus, Paul's disciple, shortly afterwards;<sup>3</sup> the letters of Ignatius show it in existence at Antioch about the year 100;<sup>4</sup> nothing shows that it did not exist at Rome already in the time of the first successors of Peter.

### *Collegiate or Unitary Episcopate*

The collegiate organisation of ecclesiastical government which characterised most of the known churches in primitive times did not, then, exclude the unity of the directing authority. Some have

<sup>6</sup> P. Batiffol, *L'Eglise naissante et le catholicisme*, 1st edn., Paris, 1909, pp. 41-42.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Bk. I, pp. 33-34.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Bk. I, p. 300.

<sup>3</sup> *Epist. ad Titum*, i, 5.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *supra*.

thought that towards the end of the first century Roman Christianity was still governed according to the collegiate system, for when the letter of St. Clement was written to the Church of Corinth in the reign of Domitian, its writer seems to appear therein rather as the chief mandatory of the Church of Rome, in the name of which the epistle is sent, rather than as its head properly so called. The collegiate character, if not of the episcopate itself, at least of the ecclesiastical organisation of Rome in early times, may seem to be confirmed by the tradition registered in the *Liber pontificalis*, according to which the two persons usually presented as the first successors of Peter, Linus and Anacletus, began to preside over the destinies of the Roman Church already in his lifetime. But this tradition is perhaps not anterior to the third century, and even if well founded, it would follow also from it that there was in the college itself a definite hierarchy, for Peter the apostle and his coadjutors could obviously not be put on the same plane as the others. After Peter, the college of presbyters still had a head, and the great reputation enjoyed by Clement makes it impossible to doubt that if he wrote the letter to the Corinthians, it was not merely as secretary to the Church, as has too easily been inferred from a slightly later work, the *Shepherd* of Hermas,<sup>5</sup> but as its best qualified representative. The early episcopal lists of Rome, moreover, make no difference between the first representatives of the Roman Church and those of the time when the existence of the monarchical episcopate admits of no question. Moreover, a college must always have a president, and it is easily understandable that there was a swift passage from an apparently plural episcopate to a unitary one.

One might indeed think to find an attestation of the existence of the unitary episcopate in the letter of St. Clement itself, for it borrows from the Greek version of the Old Testament the significant terms ἀρχιερεύς and ιερεύς, and seems to apply these to two kinds of dignitaries, who would be none other than the governors of the Christian communities, the bishop, ἐπίσκοπος and the priests, πρεσβύτεροι. But some question whether Clement had in mind in these passages any hierarchy other than the Mosaic one. Even so, this is figurative of the new. But the distinction between the

<sup>5</sup> The *Shepherd* (*Vis.*, II, 4, 3) says that it was Clement's office to correspond with the other churches. There is nothing here which would reduce him necessarily to the functions of a secretary; inter-ecclesiastical relations are the province of the head of a church.

bishop and the presbyteral body, even if not made in works such as the letter of Clement or the *Shepherd* of Hermas, is affirmed in a most striking way almost at the same time in the letters of St. Ignatius of Antioch to the churches of Asia. It is incontestably the monarchical episcopate that these letters proclaim, with a clearness which leaves nothing to be desired, as existing in the greatest metropolis of the East. And they do not speak of it as a new institution, or one which met with any difficulties or opposition in its introduction. The *Muratorian Fragment*, about 150, speaks of Pius the brother of Hermas who wrote the *Shepherd*, as the one bishop of the Church of Rome, and moreover, an ecclesiastical organisation similar to that of Antioch appears in the course of the second century, sooner or later in very different countries, and hence there is reason to believe that if this ecclesiastical organisation did not exist everywhere as such from the beginning, at least it was not something fundamentally unlike the collegiate organisation, and that the latter, under a different appearance, already contained the germ of the future development, from which this naturally and very quickly arose.

It has indeed been suggested that the monarchical episcopate was not really founded until after the middle of the second century, and that its development was connected with the general movement of reaction in the Church against Marcionism,<sup>6</sup> and that the Church only then defined against this heresy its dogmas, its Scriptural canon, and even its hierarchy, concentrating this in the episcopal authority. The theory makes light of the testimony of Ignatius, and requires the inauthenticity of the Ignatian letters. But these letters say nothing of Marcion and the resulting controversy, and the episcopate is represented in them as in possession: how then can they be explained by the anti-Marcionite controversy, or as a defence of an institution which they do not represent as being contested?

The truth is rather, as we have already said, that the explicit distinction between the presbyteral college, and its head the bishop, was made more or less rapidly in different places; towards the middle of the second century it was an accomplished fact almost everywhere.

<sup>6</sup> On the exaggerations of the "Pan-Marcionism" of some contemporary writers, see the next volume. One of the most recent refutations, dealing essentially with the formation of the Scriptural canon, is that of Père Lagrange, *Saint Paul ou Marcion*, in *Revue Biblique*, 1932, pp. 5-30.

## *The Question of Alexandria*

An apparent exception is presented by the Church of Alexandria, where, until about the middle of the third century, the bishop would seem to have been really only the *primus inter pares* in the presbyteral body, the members of which consecrated him. The testimony of the patriarch Eutyches seems definite in this respect.<sup>7</sup> It would follow from this that the Church of Alexandria retained the primitive regime longer than others, and that the distinction between the presbyteral college and its head was less marked than it became subsequently.<sup>8</sup> This peculiarity might be explained by the fact that, until the third century, there was no other bishop in Egypt besides that of Alexandria. Demetrius (189-232), was the first to establish others, for he set up three outside the metropolis. Until then, the sole bishop of Egypt, who had his seat of Alexandria, could not have been consecrated by other members of an episcopate which he alone represented; he would seem to have been consecrated by the co-participants of the apostolic authority residing in the college, the members of which had more power than simple priests have to-day, while those of the bishop were less exclusively concentrated in his person. Things would no longer be the same after Demetrius. A memory of this situation would seem to exist in a passage in the fourth century treatise of uncertain authorship called the *Ambrosiaster*, which mentions the right to confirm, *con-signare*, as possessed by the priests of Egypt in default of the bishop.<sup>9</sup>

Similarly the period, vague in duration, in which in Rome also the distinction between the bishop and the presbyteral college would seem to have been less explicit than it was later on, might correspond to the period in which there was no other bishop in Italy besides that of Rome, i.e., down to the middle of the second century. When other episcopal sees were instituted, the holder of one of them consecrated the bishop of Rome, and such would be the origin of the traditional custom by which a newly elected pope, if not already a bishop, is even to-day consecrated by the bishop of Ostia, the first of the suburbican bishops of Rome.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Migne, P. G., CXL, 982.

<sup>8</sup> Thus Timothy, to whom St. Paul entrusted the church of Ephesus, received the imposition of hands of the college of presbyters (I Tim., iv, 14).

<sup>9</sup> *Ambrosiaster*, Eph. 4, 11 et seq.

<sup>10</sup> On all this cf. K. Mueller, *Kleine Beiträge zur alten Kirchengeschichte*, in *Zeitschrift für neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, Vol. XXVIII, 1929, pp. 273-305.

But in reality, how many conjectures are involved in all this! The text of the *Ambrosiaster* has not much weight, for the instances of priests invested with the power to confirm are not rare. The testimony of the patriarch Eutyches is very late, seeing that it belongs only to the tenth century. St. Jerome, much closer to the facts, who also speaks in a letter of the office of the priests in the nomination of the bishop of Alexandria, does not explain whether he is referring to the election or the consecration. Finally, Origen, a compatriot and contemporary of Demetrius, and therefore also of the change of discipline said to have taken place in the mode of consecration of the Alexandrian bishop, makes no allusion whatever to it in his homilies at Cæsarea on the duties and privileges of bishops.<sup>11</sup> It is quite possible, in fine, that the later tradition has here confused election with consecration.

From the moment when the episcopate as we know it was organised everywhere, the bishop appears universally as the authentic head of a church; he is its pastor *par excellence*, its essential priest, without whom the liturgy cannot be celebrated in its integrity, its guide in the faith, its director in discipline, its administrator in the matter of its collective interests, and its representative to those outside.

### *Priests*

The presbyteral college, from which the bishop is not in early days always explicitly distinguished, is composed of the priests, *πρεσβύτεροι*, or elders. These form the bishop's council, and help him in his liturgical and teaching functions; they take his place when necessary, and particularly when the see is vacant.

In all the churches at the head of which we see in the course of the second century a bishop in action, he seems to be almost everything, and the office of the priests is not, so far as we can judge, comparable with what it becomes later on, except in large Christian communities or where the ineluctable law of the division of labour calls for a more positive collaboration by them.

Certain texts even give the impression that the second order of collaborators of the bishop, inferior in dignity to the priests, namely, the deacons, *διάκονοι*, servants, had then, if not more real authority,

<sup>11</sup> In *Num.*, *Hom.* 22. Cf. also *Contra Celsum*, VIII, 75.



at least a more effective ministry.<sup>12</sup> The priests will have more importance when the extension of the Christian communities will bring about their division into sections which will be called parishes, *παροικίαι*, at the head of which certain priests will be placed.

### § 3. THE OTHER ECCLESIASTICAL ORDERS

#### *The Deacons*

The diaconate, the third rank in ecclesiastical order, clearly goes back to the apostolic age. We have seen that it was instituted by the Apostles themselves when, according to the account in the *Acts* (vi, 2 *et seq.*) they chose the seven who were to "serve tables," *διακονεῖν τραπέζαις*, and laid hands on them. Very soon the care of the poor, which had so greatly preoccupied the Church from its birth, was also entrusted to them.

Hence we get the two fold ministry of deacons in the first centuries: they were the active liturgical auxiliaries of the Church, distributing the Eucharist and conferring baptism with the authorisation of the bishop, and assisting the latter in his administration, particularly in seeing to the interests of the community. This explains why, at a time when practically the whole of the priesthood properly so called was still concentrated in the bishop, the diaconate stood out in greater relief than the priesthood.

Inferior orders were to be created later on, in order to relieve the deacons of a certain number of functions of lesser importance. But they were completely organised only in the third century.

#### *Deaconesses*

On the other hand, we note the early disappearance of an institution the existence of which is clear in apostolic times, that of deaconesses, mentioned in the epistle to the Romans (xvi, i), who are probably not distinct from the widows referred to in *I Tim.* (v, 3 *et seq.*), although there must have also been some who were

<sup>12</sup> St. Ignatius, in his letter to the church of the Magnesians, VI, 1, in a symbolical interpretation of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, says that the bishop presides in place of God, the priests in place of the college of the apostles, and the deacons are charged with the ministry of Jesus Christ. The *Didascalia Apostolorum* (see next book) attributes an absolute right to the portion of the oblations not distributed to the faithful to the bishop and the deacons only.

virgins: they devoted themselves to the care of the sick, and the unfortunate, and to the education of children.

They are mentioned still in the letter of Pliny, who tells Trajan that he had put two *ministræ* to the torture, to get confessions from them.

### *Doctors*

Certain Churches, amongst them the greatest such as Rome and Alexandria, also had teachers or *didascaloi*, who devoted themselves to religious teaching. The Acts of the Apostles (xiii, 1) and the epistles of St. Paul (*I Cor.* xiii, 28-31; *Ephes.* iv, 11-12) already mention them. The *Shepherd* of Hermas refers several times to the activity of the teachers in the Roman community towards the middle of the second century. St. Justin the philosopher and other personages taught about the same time. But in their schools a teaching was given for which the ecclesiastical authority did not take the responsibility, though it certainly did not disinterest itself in it. The Roman schools of the second century were in fact only private institutions, due to personal initiatives. It is not till a little later that we find an ecclesiastical school functioning at Alexandria. This was an advanced school of catechetics whose mission it was to teach the truths of the faith, not merely to children, but to adult and educated converts, and placed as it was under the direct control of the Church, it became an official institution.<sup>1</sup>

### *Prophets*

The Primitive Church had also known "prophets," whom St. Paul treated with honour; the *Acts* mention the daughters of Philip as having received the gift of prophecy. But already the *Didache* seems to mistrust the prophets: they were itinerant preachers, destined to disappear fairly soon, inasmuch as they doubled the existing hierarchy, and the nature of their ministry involved the risk of opening their ranks to persons of unequal worth. Thus, although the *Didache*, while warning readers against the false prophets, displays a great veneration for those inspired by the Spirit of God, and although the *Shepherd* of Hermas puts prophets above priests,<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On the *didascaloi* cf. *infra*, pp. 545 *et seq.*, and next book.

<sup>2</sup> *Visio*, III, 1, 8.

they very quickly ceased to play a recognised part. Montanism was in the second half of the second century an attempt to restore the reign of prophets in the Church; in spite of its local success in Asia and some sympathy elsewhere, mainly in Africa, it collapsed in presence of the firm resistance of the hierarchy.<sup>3</sup>

### *Clergy and Laity*

The bishop, the presbyteral college and the deacons, then, alone constituted the clergy properly so called, forming in each church a group separate from the rest of the faithful. The separation is not so sharp as it will be later between layfolk and clerics,<sup>4</sup> but the distinction is already shown by the exercise of functions to which in fact not all can aspire. They call for a certain number of particular qualities in those who desire them. The pastoral epistles (*II Tim.* iii, 21-23; *Titus* i, 5-9) already excluded those with two wives, i.e., who had married more than once. According to the *Didascalia Apostolorum*, the episcopate could be received only by those fifty years old, and the priesthood only by those who were thirty. On the other hand, there was no thought in the first two centuries of the obligation of celibacy. The preferences of St. Paul (*I Cor.* vii, 7, 32-34) for this state are manifest, and he might have appealed to the words of Jesus Himself (*Matt.* xix, 12) about spiritual eunuchs. But the esteem for continence, however real it may have been in the primitive epoch, did not go so far as to impose it even on those who aspired to holy orders. A married man could receive them without being obliged to renounce conjugal life. On the other hand, quite early—for the practice was established by the third century—ordination deprived one who was then celibate of the right to marry subsequently, at least unless he renounced the exercise of ecclesiastical functions. But from the second century the state of virginity was in high honour in the Church,<sup>5</sup> and it is not surprising that the idea spread of calling to the priesthood by preference those Christians who were disposed to keep to this state and who were regarded as more perfect.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. next book.

<sup>4</sup> The expression *ἄνθρωπος λαϊκός* is already found in the letter of St. Clement (XI, 5).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. St. Justin, *Apologia*, I, 15; Athenagoras, *Legatio pro Christianis*, 33; Minucius Felix, *Octavianus*, 31.

*Choosing Clerics; Bishops Elected by the Churches*

The choice of the first clerics belonged almost exclusively to the Apostles, and the choice of their successors and of new ecclesiastical recruits to the successors of the Apostles. But the opinion of the ordinary faithful was not without its influence upon this choice, and after the death of the first heads of communities, the latter designated their new pastors. In other words, the bishops were elected by the Churches, but they were usually proposed by the clergy of the episcopal city, and it was for the Christian people then to confirm their choice. The transmission of the episcopal character took place only by the consecration of the new elect by a bishop already in office, allowing for the possibility of survivals of the collegiate episcopate which would explain episcopal consecrations made by a presbyteral body like that of Alexandria, if the existence of such a usage were proved.

## § 4. ECCLESIASTICAL GEOGRAPHY

Were the forms of religious life and ecclesiastical organisation we have just described found wherever Christians existed?

*Episcopal Sees*

The answer is in the affirmative, generally speaking, but there were exceptions. Very small Christian nuclei could not constitute themselves into communities possessing all the organs found in more important communities. And in particular, there could not be as many bishops as there were Christian centres.

From the fourth century, the almost general rule will apparently be that to each *civitas* in the Empire in which the faith is solidly established there will correspond an episcopal see. In the second century Christian penetration was not sufficiently advanced to bring this about, and there are reasons for thinking that in a country like Gaul, for example—apart from Narbonne—there was, until the third century, no episcopal see other than that of Lyons, whereas according to the martyrological traditions, the Gospel had been previously preached and received beyond the Gallic metropolis in a degree surpassing that of the ecclesiastical dioceses of the later

epoch. For no other bishopric is mentioned then, and other sees seem from the episcopal lists not to go back before the third century. This state of things lasted perhaps longer than is sometimes allowed;<sup>1</sup> it was the most probable in the second century.

### *The Future Metropolises*

At a time when not every city possessed a bishop, the grouping of bishops into ecclesiastical provinces such as it would be later on did not yet exist. But geographical proximity and common traditions already established a natural solidarity between sees in the same region, and we can thus speak of an Asiatic Church, formed by the various Churches of this province, which comprised numerous episcopal cities like Ephesus, Smyrna or Sardis.

It is probable that already in the groups thus constituted, the more venerable antiquity of a particular Church, and sometimes its apostolic foundation, itself not altogether unconnected with the previous importance of the city, gave it a particular prestige and thereby also a particular authority. This was the case with Ephesus, Antioch and Alexandria.

## § 5. THE ROMAN CHURCH

### *The Roman Church in the 1st Century*

Still more did the Church of Rome enjoy from the first a special position. Because it was the centre of the Greco-Latin world, Rome had attracted the head of the apostolic college and also the Apostle *par excellence* of the Gentiles. Inasmuch as Rome was the last residence of Peter, hallowed for ever by his martyrdom and that of Paul, and occupied the incomparable place of the capital city, whatever sentiments some Christians may have entertained concerning the Empire itself, the Roman Church appears as the senior member of the great Christian family from its first manifestation in history after the deaths of Peter and Paul, although in

<sup>1</sup> We shall return in the next book to this question of the Gallic sees before the middle of the third century. It has been the subject of an interesting discussion between Mgr. Duchesne, *Fastes épiscopaux de l'ancienne Gaule*, Vol. I, pp. 29-59, and Harnack, *Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums*, 2nd edn., Vol. II, pp. 373-397.

fact other Churches may have been older. In the Apostolic period, and so long as James the Lord's brother, who presided over the destinies of the Christian community at Jerusalem, was alive, this latter church, although it never exercised any special authority after the departure of Peter, remained nevertheless the Mother Church, venerated and assisted by the others. On all sides collections were made to give help to its members, who had voluntarily deprived themselves of their possessions by the communal system instituted in the enthusiasm of the first days. But that lasted only for a time. After the catastrophe of A.D. 70, Jerusalem temporarily ceased to exist. The Church which continued that which had been in the Holy City rapidly became isolated in the particularism of the Jewish Christians, and the churches as a whole soon ceased to look towards her. Rome quite naturally came to inherit to the full this spiritual succession, as a more vigorous branch substitutes its strength for that of a trunk which the sap no longer nourishes.

Thus the history of the Church of Rome very quickly overflows its own boundaries, and either by its spontaneous action or by reason of the recourse had to her, she becomes very closely concerned in the happenings in the Church universal.

### *St. Clement*

We see this almost at once after the death of St. Peter. His immediate successors Linus and Anacletus, if they were not, as certain traditions seem to indicate,<sup>1</sup> merely his auxiliaries, did not in any case stand out in much relief; Linus is honoured as a martyr, but we do not know his title to this veneration. But we feel ourselves in the presence of a person of some importance when we come to the one who may be regarded as the real successor of Peter, St. Clement,<sup>2</sup> whose intervention in the ecclesiastical affairs of another Christian community, that of Corinth, and the almost canonical character attributed thereupon to the letter written by him on this occasion, show clearly the prestige and authority of his church.

Let it suffice to recall briefly the facts already set forth.

The community at Corinth, the most important, apparently, at

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 478.

<sup>2</sup> On the personality of Clement, cf. *supra*, p. 389.

that time in Roman Greece, of which this famous city was the metropolis, was disturbed by serious internal disagreements in the reign of Domitian: some members of the presbyteral college, appointed by the Apostles themselves, were set at nought by a party of young people with a readiness which even gave some scandal to those outside.

The Church of Rome, acting as though from its origin it had been conscious of a mission which, as the sequel shows, was not denied, considered it its duty to make its voice heard. It had itself hardly emerged from a difficult time—for we know that it had been hard pressed towards the end of the reign of Domitian, when about the year 95 it sent to the Church of Corinth three of its members, Claudius Ephebus, Valerius Bito and Fortunatus, to make representations, and to take a letter from Clement, written in Greek, then the language of the Church, recommending fraternal charity and respect for authority.

This letter is truly a noteworthy document, very Roman in character, in which we perceive a kindly Christianity, in no wise hostile to the society in which it is developing, a valuable example of "the wise and positive spirit which ever since those far-off times has animated Roman piety."<sup>3</sup> It is strange that some modern writers see here nothing more than a reflection of the Jewish mentality.<sup>4</sup> Speaking of the evil effects of indiscipline, and the value of obedience, Clement sets forth the ecclesiastical ministry as coming from the Apostles and Christ, and therefore as having the right to be obeyed. Consequently, the guilty faithful of Corinth ought to repent, and certain of them should depart, if peace should require it. "Is there amongst you someone generous, compassionate, and filled with charity? Let such a one say: 'If I am the cause of the sedition . . . I will leave the country, I will go wherever it is desired . . . but let the flock of Christ live in peace with its constituted presbyters!' He who will act thus will gain great glory in Christ, and he will be well received everywhere."<sup>5</sup> The Church will pray for these repentant Christians, and Clement thereupon utters a prayer in which we may see "a specimen of the way in

<sup>3</sup> L. Duchesne, *Hist. anc. de l'Eglise*, Vol. I, p. 221.

<sup>4</sup> Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, Göttingen, 1st edn., 1913; 2nd edn., 1921, pp. 291 et seq. Cf. *supra*, p. 417, n. 1.

<sup>5</sup> 54.

which the leaders of the Christian assemblies developed at that time the theme of the eucharistic prayer.”<sup>6</sup> The letter ends with a last exhortation, and salutations.<sup>7</sup>

There is no indication at all that this Roman initiative gave rise to any discontent or surprise at Corinth. True, we do not know how the Corinthian crisis was settled. But the success of Clement’s initiative is shown by the fame of his letter, for it was put by its recipients with the books read together with the Scriptures in the Sunday assemblies.

### *The Testimony of St. Ignatius of Antioch*

Shortly afterwards, the pre-eminence of the Roman Church was proclaimed, as we have already seen,<sup>8</sup> by St. Ignatius of Antioch. In a letter he addressed in August, 107, to the Roman Church, he calls it “president of the charity” or “brotherhood,” προκαθήμενη τῆς ἀγάπης,<sup>9</sup> and this name “agape” was at that time a synonym for the Christian union, or in other words, the Church itself.<sup>10</sup> This presidency was no mere honorary one: Ignatius adds that Rome, which heard the very words of the Apostles Peter and Paul, has the right to guide the other churches in the faith: “You have never deceived anyone; you have taught others; I desire that all that you prescribe by your teaching may remain uncontested.”<sup>11</sup>

### *The Testimony of St. Irenæus*

The end of the second century echoed its beginning, the West echoed the East, Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons echoed Ignatius of Antioch when, in his *Adversus hæreses*, written under the pontifi-

<sup>6</sup> L. Duchesne, *ibid.*, p. 222.

<sup>7</sup> The best editions of the *Prima Clementis*, thus named to distinguish it from a second apocryphal letter, are those of Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, Part I, London, 1890, and of Funk, *Patres Apostolici*, Vol. I, Tübingen, 1901. Cf. *supra*, p. 409, n. 4.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. above, pp. 425-426.

<sup>9</sup> *Rom.*, *inscr.* On the sense of these words, see Lelong’s edn. in *Les Pères Apostoliques*, III, Paris, 1910, pp. 54-55.

<sup>10</sup> The translation of προκαθήμενη τῆς ἀγάπης as “which presides over charity,” i.e., which is superior by its works of charity, is, although in harmony with the facts, to be rejected. Προκαθήμενη requires a concrete complement, designating a place or a collectivity. And we know besides that St. Ignatius currently uses ἀγάπη in the sense of ἐκκλησία (cf. *Trall.*, XIII, i; *Phil.*, XI, 2).

<sup>11</sup> *Rom.*, III, 1.



cate of Pope Eleutherius (175-189) he attributed to the Roman Church a superior pre-eminence, *pontentior principalitas*, which he likewise connected with its foundation by the Apostles Peter and Paul, and by reason of which the other churches ought to be in agreement with it, *convenire*.<sup>12</sup>

### *The Epitaph of Abercius*

Lastly, let us add that a well known text, the epitaph of Abercius, Bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia Salutaris, under Marcus Aurelius, also gives, in the form of a symbolism which has given rise to many discussions but the sense of which seems now to be beyond question, a witness to the majesty of the Roman Church, the Queen of the Christian world.<sup>13</sup>

Nevertheless, apart from the striking intervention of St. Clement in the affairs of Corinth, the Church of Rome, from the end of the first century to the end of the second, remained like others, modest in its external action, and of the majority of its heads, from St. Clement to Pope Victor, the contemporary of Irenæus, we know very little.

### *The Roman Pontiffs as Guardians of Doctrine and as Heads of the Church*

But that would certainly not be a sufficient reason to deny that the Roman Church had heads at that time. We have said above that the possible survival, perhaps more apparent than real, of the collegiate episcopate during a time difficult to determine, would not contradict it.<sup>14</sup> On the other hand, a rather strange theory has been advanced in connection with the Roman episcopal lists by a

<sup>12</sup> *Adv. hæc.*, III, 3, 2 (Migne, P. G., VII, 848-849). [On the interpretation of this passage see Fortescue, *Early Papacy*, London, 1920, pp. 55-7. More detailed discussion in *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, s.v. Irenée.—Tr.]

<sup>13</sup> "I am the disciple of a holy shepherd, who feeds his flocks of sheep on the mountains and in the plains, who has great eyes whose vision extends everywhere. It is he who taught me the Scriptures worthy of belief. It is he who sent me to Rome to contemplate the royal majesty, and to see a queen in golden vestments and golden sandals." The text of the epitaph, with a summary of the discussion it has aroused, and the literature of the subject down to 1907 will be found in the article *Abercius* in the *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne* of Dom Cabrol. [Text, translation and photograph of the grave stone are given in S.P.C.K.'s *Texts for Students*, No. 11.—Tr.]

<sup>14</sup> Cf. pp. 478-480.

recent historian of the Papacy, Erich Caspar. Before the publication of the first volume of a *Geschichte des Papsttums*<sup>15</sup> he had written a work entitled *Die ältere römische Bischofsliste*<sup>16</sup> in which he maintained that the Roman episcopal list, conserved with more or less important variations in catalogues such as the Philocalian and Liberian and the Chronicle of Eusebius, is the list not so much of heads of the Roman Church as of personages regarded as the guardians of the authentic tradition, whose names could be opposed to those of the heretics; going back as far as St. Peter, they would oppose the innovators by the antiquity of the true doctrine as taught by the Apostles.

This is attractive if it be regarded as an affirmation of the essentially doctrinal character of the ecclesiastical magisterium, but hardly an acceptable thesis if it implies a dissociation of the governing authority and the teaching authority: the list of the popes of the first two centuries would in that case be, not a list of heads of the Church, but of leaders of thought, or hardly more. But those who represented doctrinal tradition had thereby doctrinal authority also, and authority as such could not exist apart from it.

<sup>15</sup> Vol. I: *Römische Kirche und Imperium romanum*, Tübingen, 1930.

<sup>16</sup> In *Schriften der Königsberger gelehrten Gesellschaft*, Jahr 2, 1926, Heft 4.

THE VARIOUS CHURCHES IN THE  
SECOND CENTURY<sup>1</sup>

## §1. THE ROMAN CHURCH

*The Episcopal Succession in Rome established from Apostolic Times*

However little may be our knowledge of the history of the popes of the first two centuries, we know more of the Roman episcopate than of that of any other Church, for the Roman Church alone has its episcopal succession established without a gap from its apostolic founders.

<sup>1</sup> Bibliography.—On the churches of the various parts of the Christian world, consult: F. Lanzoni, *Le origini delle diocesi antiche d'Italia* (*Studi e testi*, 35), Rome, 1923, 2nd edn. under the title: *Le diocesi d'Italia dalle origini al principio del secolo VII*, 2 vols., Faenza, 1927; F. Savio, *Gli antichi vescovi d'Italia dalle origini al 1300 descritti per regioni. La Lombardia*, 1st part, Bergamo, 1898, 2nd part, 1929 and 1932; F. Ughelli, *Italia sancta*, Re-edited by J. Colegi, 10 vols., Venice, 1717-22; S. A. Morcelli, *Africa cristiana*, 3 vols., Brizen, 1816-7; P. Monceaux, *Histoire littéraire de l'Afrique chrétienne depuis les origines jusqu'à l'invasion arabe*, 7 vols. so far, Paris, 1901-23; Dom A. Leclercq, *L'Afrique chrétienne*, 2 vols., Paris, 1904, 2nd edn. of Vol. I; A. Audollent, *Carthage romaine*, Paris, 1901; A. Toulotte, *Géographie de l'Afrique chrétienne*, 4 vols., Rennes-Paris, 1892 (I); Montreuil-sur-Mer, 1894 (II and III); Rennes-Paris, 1894 (XIV); J. Mesnage, *L'Afrique chrétienne, Evêchés et ruines antiques d'après les manuscrits de Mgr. Toulotte*, Paris, 1912; E. Le Blant, *Inscriptions chrétiennes de la Gaule*, 2 vols., Paris, 1856-65; *Nouveau recueil des inscriptions chrétiennes de la Gaule*, Paris, 1892; *Gallia christiana*, by Dom Denis de Sainte-Marthe and the Benedictines of St. Maur, 13 vols., Paris, 1715-85, completed by B. Hauréau, 3 vols., Paris, 1856, 1860 and 1865; the 13 first volumes reprinted by Dom Piolin, 1870-5; Mgr. L. Duchesne, *Fastes épiscopaux de la Gaule*, 3 vols., Paris, 1894, 2nd edn., 1907, 1910 and 1915; T. Scott Holmes, *Origin and Development of the Christian Church in Gaul during the first six centuries of the Christian Era*, London, 1911; C. Jullian, *Histoire de la Gaule*, Vol. IV: *Le gouvernement de Rome*, Paris, 1914 (ch. xi is devoted to the Christians in Gaul); J. Zeiller *Les origines chrétiennes de la Gaule*, in *Revue d'histoire de l'Eglise de France*, Vol. XII, 1926, pp. 16-34; Dom. L. Gougoud, *Les chrétientés celtiques*, Paris, 1911; Huerner, *Inscriptiones Hispaniæ christianæ*, Berlin, 1871, Supplement, 1900; L. Garcia Villada, *Historia ecclesiastica de Espana*, I, *El cristianesimo durante la dominacion romana*, Madrid, 1929, 2 vols.; Huerner, *Inscriptiones Britanniarum christianæ*, London and Berlin, 1876; Dom H. Leclercq, *L'Espanne chrétienne*, Paris, 1900; Le Quien, *Oriens christianus*, 3 vols., Paris, 1740; V. Chapot, *La province romaine d'Asie*, Paris, 1904; ch. vii deals with the Christian

### *The Popes of the First Century*

But its chronology remains uncertain. A catalogue, the first form of which may go back to the time of Pope Eleutherius,<sup>2</sup> who was a contemporary of the Emperor Commodus, and who died in 189, gives, if St. Peter was really martyred in 64, a total of 125 years for the pontificates of his first twelve successors.

We have already had occasion to say<sup>3</sup> that the first two, Linus and Anacletus, are almost unknown; they were perhaps first the auxiliaries of Peter in the government of the Roman Church, and the transposition to the time of Peter of the twelve years of episcopate attributed to each of them might be the origin of the tradition of the twenty-five years of the Roman episcopate of the Prince of the Apostles. St. Clement, the first successor of Peter who is well known, was a contemporary of Domitian.

### *The Popes of the Second Century*

Next come Evaristus, Alexander, Xystus and Telesphorus, almost all bearers of Greek names, contemporaries of the emperors Nerva, Trajan and Hadrian. Telesphorus alone is known, because of his martyrdom under the reign of Hadrian.<sup>4</sup> Hyginus and Pius, the latter mentioned in the *Muratorian Fragment* about 150, perished under Antoninus.<sup>5</sup>

Anicetus, who succeeded Pius, received in 154 a visit from the illustrious bishop of Smyrna, St. Polycarp. Soter next, under Marcus Aurelius, may have heard in Rome the story of the prodigy of the Thundering Legion.<sup>6</sup> He was replaced by the old deacon

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church; H. Grégoire, *Recueil des Inscriptions grecques chrétiennes d'Asie Mineure*, in course of publication, Paris, 1922; Heckel, *Die Kirche von Agypten, Ihre Anfänge, ihre Organisation und ihre Entwicklung, bis zur Zeit des Nicenum*, Strassburg, 1918; G. Hanotaux, *Histoire de la nation égyptienne*, Vol. III, 2nd part, *L'Égypte romaine*, by V. Chapot, and 3rd part, *L'Égypte chrétienne et byzantine*, by C. Diehl, Paris, 1933; F. J. A. Hort, *Judaistic Christianity*, London, 1894.

<sup>2</sup> The list of Roman bishops is given by St. Irenæus in the third book of his treatise *Against Heresies*. It is reproduced by Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.*, V, 6, 1. But it did not indicate the length of each pontificate. On the various catalogues, cf. the article *Listes épiscopales* in the *Dictionnaire d'Archéologie chrétienne*.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *supra*, pp. 479, 488.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 394.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 397.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *supra*, pp. 402-403.

of his predecessor, Eleutherius, who became pope before the death of Marcus Aurelius and received the letter from Dionysius of Corinth to the Church of Rome which forms one of the links in the chain of testimonies concerning the Roman apostolate of St. Peter;<sup>7</sup> Eleutherius received also a visit from Irenæus, the envoy of the Church of Lyons,<sup>8</sup> illustrious then because of its martyrs, and whence the Gospel was to spread over a whole portion of Gaul; he was requested to define his position in the matter of Montanism.<sup>9</sup> His pontificate ended only in 189, nine years after the coming of Commodus to the throne.

But it was only his successor, Pope Victor, who saw the pardon granted by the emperor to those condemned to the Sardinian mines, and the precarious but unquestionable improvement in the relations between the Church and the Empire which marked the reign of the last of the Antonines.

## § 2. THE OTHER CHURCHES IN THE WEST

### *The Churches of Italy*

Besides Rome, several Christian communities in Italy have left traces of their existence before the end of the second century.

We have already spoken of those of Puteoli and of Pompeii, known already in the first century.<sup>1</sup> Christian cemeteries have been discovered at Naples and elsewhere which may go back to the second century. But only two episcopal sees, other than Rome, can claim such great antiquity, and these are Milan and Ravenna.

The seventh bishop of Milan, Mirocles, was present at the synods of Rome and Arles in 313 and 314, and the twelfth bishop of Ravenna took part in the Council of Sardica in 343, and hence the respective founders of these two churches, or at least their first titular bishops, must have lived between 150 and 200. The traditions concerning an apostolate of St. Barnabas at Milan belong to the sphere of legend, like that which makes St. Apollinaris, the Apostle of Ravenna, a disciple of St. Peter.

Also, we know hardly anything more about the history of these

<sup>7</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.*, II, 25, 8, and IV, 23, 9. Cf. Bk. I, pp. 287-9.

<sup>8</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.*, V, 4, 2.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. next book.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 360.

Churches before the fourth century besides the fact of their existence and the names of the pastors who ruled them. We must add, however, so far as Ravenna is concerned, that its Christian community arose in the port of Classe, as is shown by the first episcopal tombs which are at some distance from the town. Here Orientals were numerous;<sup>2</sup> and here, as in many other places, they evidently provided Christian propaganda with its first agents and its first recruits. But as to the progress which it then made, or its penetration into other parts of Italian territory before the third century, we are so far unable to say anything. In fact, until that time, the history of the Church in Italy reduces itself practically to the history of the Roman Church.

### *Africa*

In Africa before this date we know only of the martyrdom of the Scillitans and what the catacombs of Hadrumentum suggest concerning a Christian life which must have begun a long time previously.<sup>3</sup> But the writings of Tertullian, which are a little later in date, show African Christianity occupying already such a position in the time of the Severi that it must have counted for something before the end of the Antonines.

### *Spain and Gaul*

In Spain the position is obscure, as we have said. In Gaul, a very old inscription preserved at Marseilles, and which seems to allude to martyrs,<sup>4</sup> might well constitute a positive testimony to the diffusion of Christianity on the coasts of Provence before the foundation of the Church of Lyons. On this church the martyrs in the persecution of Marcus Aurelius bestow an incomparable splendour in the middle of the second century. St. Irenæus, successor to St. Pothinus, will bring it a new glory.<sup>5</sup> But from Lyons we know little as to

<sup>2</sup> On these beginnings of the sees of Milan and Ravenna, cf. F. Lanzoni, *Le origini delle diocesi antiche d'Italia* (*Studi e testi*, 35, Rome, 1923), pp. 452-75 and 543-60).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. pp. 367-368, 404-405.

<sup>4</sup> Inscription called the Volusian, *C.I.L.*, XII, 480.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. next book.

the progress of the Gospel and Christian life in Gaul down to the period of the Severi.<sup>6</sup>

### *Britain*

Of Roman Britain<sup>7</sup> we know nothing in this period, and the same remark applies to the Illyrian countries. But it is otherwise with the Mediterranean East.

## § 3. THE CHURCHES OF THE EAST

### *Greece*

We have enumerated above<sup>1</sup> the already numerous churches which have left proofs of their existence in Greece in the first and second centuries. Eusebius has handed on the illustrious name of the first bishop of one of these, Dionysius the Areopagite, the convert of St. Paul, who was put at the head of the Christian community of Athens.<sup>2</sup>

As to their internal life, we know the famous episode which caused the intervention of Clement of Rome at Corinth in the last years of the first century.<sup>3</sup> Some seventy years later, we find at the head of this same Church of Corinth a very prominent personage, Dionysius, who had succeeded a bishop named Primus. Dionysius was consulted from all sides, and his letters were so well thought of that they were collected together.<sup>4</sup> This collection contains amongst others the letter to the Church of Rome, the importance of which we have already pointed out,<sup>5</sup> another to the Church of Sparta, and another to the Church of Athens, which had just passed through a serious crisis. Following the persecution which had removed the bishop Publius in the reign of Marcus Aurelius, the Christians of

<sup>6</sup> Cf. O. Hirschfeld, *Zur Geschichte des Christentums in Lugdunum vor Constantin* (*Sitzungsberichte* of the Berlin Academy, 1895, pp. 381-409) and next book.

<sup>7</sup> The origins of British Christianity are discussed in the next book.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. pp. 364-365.

<sup>2</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.*, IV, 25.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. pp. 488-490.

<sup>4</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.*, XVIII, 23.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Bk. I. pp. 286-9.

Athens had almost abandoned their faith; but their new bishop, Quadratus, brought them back once more to the straight path.

Two other hellenic Christian communities, both in Crete, appear also in the correspondence of Dionysius of Corinth: that of Knossos, which had for its bishop Pinytos, an ascetic, and that of Gortyna, whose bishop was called Philip.

These testimonies are all the more valuable because we know little otherwise concerning Christian Greece in the second century. Indeed, it seems that at this time, as in the following century, its history was hardly so full as that of Greek Asia. Perhaps Christianity made slower progress there; it would not be surprising that its propaganda found greater difficulty in overcoming resistance in a country in which the lower classes were most fully penetrated by the traditions of the old Mediterranean polytheism, and whose upper classes were most inclined to rationalistic criticism. Even so, Christian Greece produced in the second century besides Dionysius of Corinth, two apologists,<sup>6</sup> the Athenian Marcianus Aristides, and Athenagoras, perhaps of the same town.<sup>7</sup>

### *Asia Minor*

Asia Minor was more speedily and more thoroughly won to the new faith. The testimony of Pliny the Younger concerning Bithynia in the time of Trajan was repeated half a century later under the pen of Lucian, through whom we learn of the anger of the famous pseudo-prophet Alexander of Abonouteiches at the great number of Christians in Pontus.<sup>8</sup>

Some illustrious personages shed the light of their martyrdom or of their activity as theologians or as preachers on the Asiatic Churches in the second century. Let it suffice to mention the names, most of them already met with, or to appear later on, of St. Polycarp of Smyrna, Papias of Hierapolis, Melito of Sardis, the apologists Quadratus, Apollinaris and Miltiades, Ammias of Philadelphia, Papirius the successor of Polycarp, Sagaris of Laodicea, Thraseas, bishop of Eumenia in Phrygia, martyred at Smyrna.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *infra*, ch. xiv.

<sup>7</sup> The Athenian origin of Athenagoras is indicated only by Philip of Sidon, whose statement is too late to call for an unreserved acceptance. [But the title of the *Apology* states that Athenagoras was "an Athenian, Christian philosopher." —Tr.]

<sup>8</sup> *Alexander seu Pseudomantis*, 38.



*Syria and Palestine*

To the south of Asia Minor, Syria occupied a position in the front rank in the Church until the second century. It was at Antioch that Christianity had freed itself from Judaism. We might almost say that the Church became truly what it ought to be only on the day when Paul, joining with Barnabas, the founder of the community at Antioch, organised with him the first distant mission, and when the supreme authorities in the Apostolic college, Peter, John and James, the brother of the Lord, accepted their view and admitted the recruits from the Gentiles without imposing circumcision upon them. The temporary establishment of St. Peter at Antioch confirmed the new state of things. In order to take his place when his own apostolate called him elsewhere, he left there Evodius,<sup>9</sup> who had as his successor St. Ignatius.

Syria from that time, like the Palestinian communities which are naturally grouped with it, figured prominently in the universal Church, with its martyrs, its bishops and its writers.

Aelia Capitolina, the Roman city built in Hadrian's time on the ruins of Jerusalem, had very soon a group of believers mainly of Gentile origin;<sup>10</sup> they had in the middle of the second century a bishop named Marcus;<sup>11</sup> one of his successors, Narcissus, was celebrated in the time of Commodus because of his longevity, his miracles and his sanctity. But whereas the first Christian Church of Jerusalem had always been regarded as the Mother Church, that of Aelia had from its commencement neither particular prerogative nor prestige, and when later on there was established in the Church the provisional organisation which raised the metropolises above ordinary bishoprics, its bishop depended for some time on that of the civil metropolis of the province, Cæsarea in Palestine.

Palestine, like Syria, could boast of illustrious martyrs. St. Simeon of Jerusalem and St. Ignatius of Antioch had laid down their lives out of fidelity to Christ almost at the same time. In the second century, Palestinian Christianity had above all to suffer from the Jews, instigated by Bar Kokhba under Hadrian (132-5).<sup>12</sup>

But it is by the work of religious teaching on the part of several of their members, clerical and lay, that the Syro-Palestinian

<sup>9</sup> Eusebius, *Chronicon*, ann. 43; *Hist. Eccles.*, III, 22.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Bk. I. p. 309.

<sup>11</sup> Eusebius, *Chronicon*, ann. 135.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *supra*, pp. 389, 395.

Churches left most traces in history in the second century: not to mention the unknown authors of the *Didache* and the *Epistle of Barnabas*, the origin of which is uncertain—it might be Egyptian—Ariston of Pella, St. Justin, born at Flavia Neapolis in Samaria, from whence he went to Rome, Tatian, Theophilus of Antioch and Hegesippus all bear their witness.<sup>13</sup>

### *Egypt*

Christian Egypt was also to shine particularly in the theological domain, and from the second half of the second century, the Catechetical School of Alexandria, destined to become so famous, had begun to function. We know less about the other aspects of the history of the Church in Egypt at the same time. We can only say that Christianity made rapid progress there, for from the beginning of the following century we find it spread over a great part of the valley of the Nile.

## § 4. THE JUDEO-CHRISTIAN CHURCH

### *The Christian Community of Pella*

There was one ethnic group which retained a character all its own in the Church of the first two centuries: this was that of the Christians who had come from Judaism, known as Judeo-Christians. We know<sup>1</sup> that some of the faithful of Judea who had constituted the community at Jerusalem had taken refuge at Pella in the course of the war which ended in the destruction of the Holy City.<sup>2</sup> But neither this separation nor the disappearance of the Temple were able to break their links with Judaism, and they continued to unite with the practice of the religion of Christ that of a certain number of ancient observances, which they reverently maintained.

### *Characteristics of the Judeo-Christian Church*

This Christian community was, however, not able to retain the prestige possessed by that of Jerusalem: governed by James, the

<sup>13</sup> Cf. ch. XIV.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Bk. I, pp. 306-7.

<sup>2</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.*, III, 5.

Lord's brother, until the Sanhedrin had him stoned in 62, and next by Simeon, another near relative of Jesus, the Mother Church had attracted the regard and consideration of all the others. When the sale of the possessions of its first members with a view to the common use of the proceeds soon rendered its material existence difficult, alms poured into it; if the Roman *plebs*, unaccustomed to work and fed by the care of its rulers, lived on the rest of the world, compelled to feed it, this mother of the Churches lived mostly on the charity of the others, but they were free offerings, and it was thought natural to send them.

The situation changed after 70, when Simeon, in presence of the imminent prospect of the ruin of Jerusalem, headed the exodus of his flock towards Pella.

Pella could not claim the prestige of the Holy City, and the particularism of its little Church tended speedily to isolate it. Some few of its members returned, it is true, to Jerusalem, which did not remain a pure desert after 70.<sup>3</sup> It was only after the repression of Bar Kokhba that the history of the old Jerusalem came to a definite end. But the reconstruction of the city under the name of Aelia Capitolina by Hadrian was far from bringing about a general return, the Emperor having forbidden Jews to stay there, and so the Jewish Christians had under these circumstances to keep away. But it is possible, nevertheless, that their pacific spirit, which kept them outside the insurrection, in spite of the assaults of the revolutionaries, and which was calculated to tranquillize the Roman authority, won for some the authorisation to return, or to remain in their ancient city. But the majority remained outside. Some migrated to Kokhaba in Transjordan, to Nazareth in Galilee, and even to Berea (Aleppo) in Northern Syria.<sup>4</sup>

The spirit of these communities continued with its particular characteristics. The representatives of the family of Christ were always held in honour among them. The sons of Jude, the Lord's

<sup>3</sup> St. Epiphanius, *On weights and measures amongst the Jews*, 14-15, ed. Dindorf, IV, 17, says that the fugitives returned from Pella, and that there was once more a small Christian community at Jerusalem, where St. Simeon certainly seems to have been martyred. According to Eusebius, *Chronicon*, ann. 131, this community would seem to have had a certain importance in the time of Hadrian. Cf. Schlatter, *Die Kirche Jerusalem von 70-130*, Gütersloh, 1898, who has utilised rabbinic texts on this subject, and J. Jeremias, *Golgotha*, in *ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ*, *Archiv für neutestamentliche Zeitgeschichte und Kulturkunde*, Beihefte, Leipzig, 1926.

<sup>4</sup> Epiphanius, *Hær.*, XXIX, 7.

brother, who according to the historian of the Judeo-Christian communities, Hegesippus,<sup>5</sup> had had to appear before Domitian, "presided then over the churches"; perhaps one of them succeeded to Simeon, martyred under Trajan. In the third century there were still in the Judeo-Christian centres some of these *Δεσπόσυνοι*, members of the Lord's family, regarded with great respect.<sup>6</sup>

The Judeo-Christians had their own Gospel, which received the name of the *Gospel according to the Hebrews*. It was related mainly to that of St. Matthew, but differed from it in some ways.<sup>7</sup>

The Judeo-Christian Church, which soon appeared somewhat singular in the group of churches, ended by occupying a border-line position. Thus almost immediately after the death of James, the Lord's brother, a section which was more Judaistic, to the point of claiming to impose the legal observances even on converts from paganism, had opposed to Simeon a rival named Tebuthis: "He began in the people," says Hegesippus,<sup>8</sup> "the work of corruption arising from the seven Jewish sects to which he himself belonged." But the other part of the Judeo-Christians came also to be regarded as a sect, that of the Ebionites, from which it had nevertheless been quite distinct at the beginning of the second century;<sup>9</sup> the name of "Ebionites" took the place or was added to that of "Nazarenes," formerly used to designate the Judeo Christians. This name "Ebionite," which meant "poor," became theirs, either because they were really poor, in accordance with the tradition of the old community of Jerusalem, or else they themselves took this name because of the merit attributed to poverty in the Gospel. But some ecclesiastical writers speak of a certain Ebion as their founder.<sup>10</sup> Whatever may have been the origin of the word, their designation by a particular term making them Christians apart was not unreasonable; the survival amongst them of the Judaism of the early times in a backward state eventually made them a veritable sect. Using only one gospel, and rejecting the epistles of St. Paul,

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Bk. I, pp. 307-8.

<sup>6</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.*, I, 7; III, 19 and 20.

<sup>7</sup> On this Gospel, cf. Harnack, *Chronologie*, p. 631, and James, *Apocryphal New Testament*.

<sup>8</sup> Quoted in Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.*, IV, 22, 5.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Bk. I, pp. 307-8, and this bk., pp. 389-90, for the circumstances of the martyrdom of Simeon, a victim of heretics, amongst whom the Ebionites must have had their place.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Tertullian, *Liber de carne Christi*, c. 14; Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.*, III, 27; Epiphanius, *Contra hæreses*, Hær., XXX.

who was in their eyes an apostate from Judaism, a part of them came to repudiate in addition the belief in the virginal conception of the Lord, and towards the latter part of the second century they already appeared as separated from the great Church.<sup>11</sup>

They gradually grew less in numbers. They existed still as a distinct group in the fourth century, when several Fathers of the Church speak of them in not very favourable terms.<sup>12</sup> They were regarded with curiosity by scholars such as St. Jerome, or students of heresies such as St. Epiphanius, but none regarded their Church as quite pure in doctrine. Yet a certain reunion seems to have taken place between them and the Great Church, and there was doubtless some fusion in the end, "but by individual action. None of the Judeo-Christian communities entered as such"<sup>13</sup> into the ecclesiastical system of the East. It is possible on the other hand that some portions may have been re-absorbed by Judaism.

"Thus ended Judeo-Christianity, obscurely and miserably. The Church, in the measure in which it developed in the greco-roman world, had left its cradle behind it. It had had to emancipate itself from Judeo-Christianity, just as it had had to do from Judaism itself."<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Origen, *In Johannem*, I, 1.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. St. Augustine, *Contra Faustum*, XIX, 4, 17; *Contra Cresconium*, I, 31; St. Jerome, *Epist. ad August.*, 89; Epiphanius, *Hæreses*, XXIX, who regards them frankly as heretics.

<sup>13</sup> Duchesne, *Hist. anc. de l'Eglise*, Vol. I, pp. 127-8.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 128.

CHRISTIAN LIFE IN THE FIRST TWO CENTURIES<sup>1</sup>

THE characteristics of various Churches may differ, but the Christian life is one in its essence, and the same signs reveal the Christian everywhere.

## § I. CHRISTIANS AND ORDINARY LIFE

*Christians Share in Civil Life*

Their name distinguishes Christians sufficiently for them to appear not to be like all the world, yet it did not make them strangers in the city, although some have maintained this.

The author of the valuable work of the end of the second century, the *Letter to Diognetes*,<sup>2</sup> insists<sup>3</sup> that Christians do not differ from their contemporaries either in vesture or in housing or in food,

<sup>1</sup> Bibliography.—Besides the works mentioned in the General Bibliography and those cited in the notes to the preceding chapter, the following may be consulted: G. Bardy, *L'Eglise à la fin du Ier siècle*, Paris, 1932; J. Lebreton, *La vie chrétienne au Ier siècle de l'Eglise*, Paris, 1932; C. Guignebert, *Tertullien, Etude sur ses sentiments à l'égard de l'Empire et de la société civile*, Paris, 1901; G. Boissier, *La fin du paganisme*, I, Paris, 1913, 5th edn., Paris, 1907; Martin-Doisy, *Histoire de la charité chrétienne pendant les six premiers siècles*, Paris, 1848; F. Allard, *Les esclaves chrétiens depuis les premiers temps de l'Eglise jusqu'à la fin de la domination romaine en Occident*, 5th edn., Paris, 1914; *Dix leçons sur le martyre*, Paris, 1913; E. Le Blant, *Les persécuteurs et les martyrs aux premiers siècles de notre ère*, Paris, 1893; H. Delehay, *Martyr et confesseur*, in *Analecta Bollandiana*, Vol. XXXIX, 1921, pp. 20-49 and 50-64; *Les origines du culte des martyrs*, 2nd edn., Brussels, 1933; A. Harnack, *Der Vorwurf des Atheismus in den drei ersten christlichen Jahrhunderten*, Leipzig, 1905; C. M. Kaufmann, *Handbuch der christlichen Archeologie*, Paderborn, 1905, and *Handbuch der christlichen Epigraphik*, Freiburg in Bressgau, 1917; P. de Labriolle, *La réaction païenne, Etude sur la polémique antichrétienne du Ier au VIe siècle*, Paris, 1934; Dom H. Leclercq, *Manuel d'archéologie chrétienne*, Paris, 1907, 2 vols.; O. Marucchi, *Manuale di Archeologia cristiana*, 4th edn. revised by G. Belvederi, Rome, 1933; *Le catacombe romane*, posthumous work published by E. Josi, Rome, 1933; J. Martigny, *Dictionnaire des Antiquités chrétiennes*, 3rd edn., Paris, 1889; J. Wilpert, *Die Malereien der Katakomben Roms*, Vol. I, Text, Vol. II, Plates, Freiburg in Bressgau, 1903, and *I sarcofagi cristiani antichi*, 2 vols. in 4 (text and plates), Rome, 1929-32.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *infra*, pp. 538-540.

<sup>3</sup> V. I, 4.

although the interdiction of things strangled and of the blood of animals, derived from the Jews, may have persisted in some communities until this time;<sup>4</sup> in all these matters which concern earthly life, they conform themselves to the customs of their countries. Tertullian, who began to write at the end of the second century, and who describes Christian life as the contemporaries of the last of the Antonines would have seen it, says in his *Apologeticus*, written about 195, addressing the pagans: <sup>5</sup> "We others, Christians, do not live apart from this world; we like you frequent the forum, the baths, the workshops, the shops, the markets, the public places; we follow the professions of sailor, soldier, planter, merchant, we put at your service our labour and our industry."

A typical detail in the martyrological history of the second century confirms these statements of Tertullian: the letter of the Church of Lyons concerning the persecution of 177 narrates that when the population, roused against the Christians, began to molest them in all kinds of ways pending the intervention of the authorities, they expelled them from the baths and the forum, which proves that they had not deserted the public places.

### *Christians Did Not Object to Military Service*

The episode of the Thundering Legion,<sup>6</sup> even if religious enthusiasm had transformed it into an imaginary miracle due to the prayers of Christian soldiers, would even so suffice to prove the existence of Christians in the armies in the Antonine period. After all, had not St. Clement in his letter to the Corinthians in the preceding century spoken of "our legions" and of "our generals," from the standpoint of a Roman?

Tertullian also confirms that the Christian faith did not exclude the calling of a soldier. His own mind may have changed on this point, and the opposite idea and the conduct it leads to will find its disciples. But until the end of the second century, a "conscientious objection" against bearing arms is no more a theme of discussion in literature than it is a current fact in Christian practice.

<sup>4</sup>One of the martyrs of Lyons answers the accusation of cannibalism made against Christians by saying that it is strange to accuse of eating human beings those who abstain even from the blood of animals (Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.*, V, 24).

<sup>5</sup>*Apol.*, 42.

<sup>6</sup>*Cf. supra*, p. 402-403.

## § 2. CHRISTIANS AND SOCIAL LIFE

*Christians and the Life of the Ancient City*

Nevertheless, the disagreement which might arise between the duty of the believer and certain obligations of the citizen was the difficult point in the situation of Christians in the city. The close union in the ancient State between civic activity and religious acts unacceptable to those who adored the one God, or of customs which the Gospel morality reproved, such as the combats in the circus, compelled the Christians to renounce a part of social life; it put them in a certain measure on the boundaries of the city. This was a moral semi-secession, incontestable and inevitable, which may have been aggravated by the apocalyptic tendencies of some inclined to prophesy, if not to desire or to prepare for the more or less proximate collapse of the ancient order. But the legitimate authorities of the Church and the most qualified representatives of Christian thought in the first two centuries did not at all stand for this extremism. Only it must be said that for Christians preoccupations of a terrestrial order went to the background, and that there existed among them, in degrees varying according to individual temperaments, a relative lack of interest in social matters, which might well prove a difficulty one day.

But in the second century their number was relatively too small for this partial abstentionism to have much effect, although it already deprived the Roman State of the active concourse of some of its best subjects, in limited domains.

*Christian Asceticism*

But on the other hand, the Christians made up for this civic failing by providing the example of a conduct better calculated than that of other men to give to human life all its dignity, which is that of a life according to the spirit. For as the *Letter to Diognetus* says again,<sup>1</sup> Christians live in the flesh, but not according to the flesh. If they avoid spectacles, combats of gladiators and wild beasts, and all the distractions of a similar nature which seem so natural to pagan society, it is because of the cruelty or immodesty of such things and all the disorders inseparable from them.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> V, 8, 9.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Tertullian, *De spectaculis*.



Christians also showed themselves indifferent to the advantages of riches, or at least they refused to enjoy them selfishly: the good things of the earth are only a means for heaping up better treasure in heaven, and they spend them liberally in the service of those deprived of them. "We who once loved gain," writes St. Justin in his First Apology,<sup>3</sup> "now distribute all we possess, and give to all the needy." Thus Christians condemned unnecessary expenditure, renouncing splendour and luxury in dress, although doubtless some of them allowed themselves a certain licence in this matter. Tertullian<sup>4</sup> criticises the liking, excessive in his view, that too many Christian women retain for the care of the person and the choice of dresses. Rigorists like him go as far as to forbid the use of flowers in the hair, as well as in the ornamentation of tombs.<sup>5</sup>

Circumspection in the personal use of the goods of the world, and also in moral conduct: these are two characteristics distinctive of the true Christian. Alone amongst all the religions, Christianity, maintaining inexorably the law of the apostolic assembly of Jerusalem, has always regarded sexual relations outside marriage as a grave fault. There were even amongst a few a tendency to condemn second marriages. Nevertheless, St. Paul had not only tolerated these, but recommended them for young widows: "I will that the younger should marry, bear children, be mistresses of families, give no occasion to the adversary to speak evil."<sup>6</sup> But the Church did not view a second marriage with a very favourable eye, and she made it an impediment for the reception of holy orders.

### § 3. CHRISTIAN PRACTICES

#### *Prayer*

Pure in their morals, and using earthly goods only for the satisfying of their essential needs and for the benefit of their neighbours, if they really lived according to the Gospel ideal, Christians also gave a large place in their daily life to prayer. Apart from worship properly so called, which was celebrated in common,<sup>1</sup> the faithful

<sup>3</sup> I, 14.

<sup>4</sup> *De cultu feminarum*.

<sup>5</sup> Tertullian, *De corona militis*. Cf. Minutius Felix, *Octavius*, 12, 38; Clement of Alexandria, *Pædagogus*, II, 8.

<sup>6</sup> I *Tim.*, v, 14.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *supra*, ch. vi.

Christian, in accordance with the Gospel precept,<sup>2</sup> prayed to his heavenly Father in secret. Following the Master, Tertullian recommends the use of the *Lord's Prayer*.<sup>3</sup> The Psalter was also utilised as a prayer book. Prayer was made more particularly in the morning and evening, as also at the third, sixth, and ninth hour (9 A.M., noon and 3 P.M.). This is the origin of the offices of Prime, Terce, Sext, None and Vespers.<sup>4</sup> We must also pray, says Tertullian, before meals and before a bath.<sup>5</sup>

### *Fasts*

The Christian who unites his soul to God in prayer also mortifies his body, the appetites of which endanger this union. He gives himself to penance as well as to prayer. Fasting, the practice of which associates him with the voluntary mortification of Christ in the desert, is the chief ascetical practice.<sup>6</sup>

In the first two centuries, the faithful fasted twice a week, on Wednesdays, perhaps in reparation for the treason of Judas, and on Fridays, in memory of the Passion; these fasts were called *stational*, from the Latin word "*statio*," which designated the guarding by soldiers of a military post. To the *stational* fast there began to be added towards the end of the second century a *paschal* fast, mentioned by St. Irenæus, which extended to the days immediately preceding the feast of Easter, and particularly Good Friday and Holy Saturday; the fast of forty days in Lent will be a later extension of this practice. These fasts consisted in abstention from all food and even all drink until the ninth hour, that is, until the middle of the afternoon.

### *Charity*

Mortified in his personal life in memory of Christ and to keep in check the ever dangerous pressure of his lower passions, the Christian worthy of this name sought only the good of his neighbour.

Each member of the community was at the service of all, and the

<sup>2</sup> *Matt.* vi, 6.

<sup>3</sup> *De Oratione*.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Hermas, Shepherd*; Tertullian, *De jejuniis*; Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.*, VII, 14.

fulfilling of this duty of charity went from almsgiving, which prevented death from hunger, to encouragement to martyrdom. The Christians of Lyons gave amongst others a very moving example of this.<sup>7</sup> Such mutual love struck the pagans: "See how they love one another," they said,<sup>8</sup> and this is perhaps among the various traits of Christian life, and in spite of all the prejudices which slandered it, the one which was most perceptible, and which people could not help admiring. The chief argument put forward by the apologists of the first centuries in favour of Christianity is, in fine, the exemplary conduct of its followers.

A pure life, a solid piety, a perfect loyalty, and a boundless charity have perhaps done more for the extension of the reign of the Gospel than the most eloquent discourses intended to convert the pagans.

#### § 4. CHRISTIANITY AND HUMANITY

##### *Christianity and Slavery*

This unique charity renewed the relations between men to such a degree that it began by a radical transformation of a social institution which seemed to be inherent in ancient society, but the principle of which was nevertheless incompatible with the spirit of Christianity, so that the latter was bound to lead to its disappearance by the extension of its domination. We refer to slavery. St. Paul had already said in the beginning<sup>1</sup> that in the Church there is "neither bond nor free," any more than one can distinguish before God the Jew from the Greek, or man from woman. Physiological, ethnical and juridical distinctions may continue to exist between human beings; but morally they fade away, and all, being equally children of God and "clothed with Christ,"<sup>2</sup> "form now only one person in Jesus Christ," and those who had ceased to belong to themselves by reason of their social condition as slaves, recover their liberty in order to give themselves, like the others, to Jesus Christ, who has made them free in making them His. In the eyes of the Church there are no slaves in reality, for the person of a man cannot belong to another man, and it was this ownership of man by man that constituted slavery.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *supra*, pp. 399-402.

<sup>8</sup> Tertullian, *Apologeticus*, 39, 7.

<sup>1</sup> *Gal.* iii, 28.

<sup>2</sup> *Gal.* iii, 27.

Nevertheless, in the political and social sphere, the Church did not begin by condemning an institution which she found established, and which as a system of social and economic organisation seemed then quite natural, if not necessary, to almost all the world.

Some Stoic philosophers, rising to a conception hitherto unknown of the value of human personality and of the natural equality of all may well have thought and said that slavery was opposed to them, but these were only theoretical views. Christianity said less, but it spoke in a different tone,<sup>3</sup> and it did more. There was no condemnation for long centuries of the institution, but an implicit denial of its basis, in the doctrine of the divine sonship as St. Paul formulated it. Together with a *de facto* acceptance of the existing social regime there was brought into being a moral system which undermined its basis. In ancient law, the slave, not being a complete person, could not exercise personal prerogatives: the slave, for instance, could not contract a veritable marriage, and the caprice of his master could break up his union. The Church did not sanction such an inferiority, and condemned such abuses of power. Furthermore, she made such an appeal to a charity which, for a true Christian, has all the exigencies of justice, that the master, in his relations with the slave, will renounce the exercise of rights which hitherto had constituted him the veritable master of a person, and not merely of his services.

The slave of a Christian master was doubtless compelled, unlike a servant of our days, to remain in his service; he might receive orders from him, or even severe treatment, which domestic service has known even down to a time near our own, but even so he was a man, towards whom the master had duties higher and more imperious than those dictated by his own interests or those of the city.<sup>4</sup> The day would come when the pressure of this sentiment of

<sup>3</sup> " . . . Let us contrast the doctrine of the Stoics, for instance, with Christian morality. They proclaim themselves citizens of the world, and they add that all men are brothers, having come from the same God. The words were almost the same, but they did not find the same echo, because they had not been spoken in the same tone" (H. Bergson, *Les deux sources de la morale et de la religion*, Paris, 1932, p. 58).

<sup>4</sup> "There are institutions the fruits of which are modified by the very fact that their spirit is improved. Slavery in the house of Pliny or in that of a Christian was similar only in name to slavery in the house of Epaphroditus or of Vedius Pollio. The legal position had not changed: the slave remained theoretically the property of his master, but for the former he was a possession that was prized and protected; he remained for the others a possession, which one used and enjoyed." (O. Lemarié, *Précis d'une sociologie*, Paris, 1933, pp. 91-2.)

the obligation of a master towards one whom circumstances had made subject to him would be so strong that it would bring about the slave's enfranchisement.<sup>5</sup> Enfranchisement multiplied in the last ages of the Roman Empire. Earlier on it was only a counsel and more rare. But this counsel was given very soon, or at least it corresponded to the implicit desire of the Christian spirit.

In any case, both masters and slaves were reminded from the commencement that they ought never to forget in their mutual relations that they are children of the same God, but to fulfil their reciprocal duties one to the other: careful service and submission on the one hand, and kindness on the other. St. Peter, it is true, exhorts the slaves of evil masters—doubtless pagan masters—to a higher virtue: "What glory is it if committing sin and being buffeted for it, you endure? But if doing well you suffer patiently, this is thankworthy before God."<sup>6</sup>

### *The Epistle to Philemon*

We also see St. Paul intervening, with great delicacy, but also with a calm assurance of being heard, in order to obtain the pardon of a slave, Onesimus, who had fled from the house of his master Philemon, a Christian of Colossæ, and had taken refuge near the Apostle, who had converted him. "Perhaps," writes Paul, "Onesimus therefore departed for a season from thee, that thou mightest receive him again for ever, not now as a slave, but instead of a slave, a most dear brother, especially to me, but how much more to thee both in the flesh and in the Lord? . . . Trusting in thy obedience I have written to thee, knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say."<sup>7</sup>

That was an exceptional case, or at least one relatively rare. But the prestige which surrounded the little slave Blandina in the midst of the martyrs of Lyons, and as we shall see later, the sentiments of the Carthaginian matron Perpetua for her slave Felicitas<sup>8</sup> bear

<sup>5</sup> "How could the new conception fail eventually to react on the institution itself, to lessen its abuses, and finally to dissolve it? The breathing of a new spirit into a society renders all its rules flexible, and predisposes it to modify their tenor. This first reform, wholly moral, is in fine a change in the inmost recesses of individual wills. Morals are changed before laws" (*ibid.*, p. 92).

<sup>6</sup> *I Pet.*, ii, 20.

<sup>7</sup> *Philemon*, i, 15-21.

<sup>8</sup> See next book.

eloquent witness to the fact that the Church was unaware of any distinction between master and slave in spiritual matters. "Both received from her the same means of personal sanctification, saw opening before them the same possibility of ecclesiastical honours, and underwent the same penances for their sins."<sup>9</sup> The attitude of the Church towards slavery, like the exquisite and magistral note of St. Paul to Philemon, show what was in fact the powerful action of the Gospel which, regenerating men's souls and proclaiming the universal brotherhood of all men in Jesus Christ, created a new society without overturning social institutions.

This universalism is again one of the characteristics of the Christian conception. It was to extend to the whole world: it embraces all humanity, and the immense domain of the Roman Empire was itself transcended. The Church was made for all the earth, whence its name Catholic, which we find already in St. Ignatius<sup>10</sup> about the year 100.

## § 5. THE PAGAN ATTITUDE TOWARDS CHRISTIANITY

### *Pagan Hostility*

Such is the Christian ideal, in all its grandeur—an ideal evidently, and one which will not be realised by all those who aim at it. Christians, even at a time very close to the "primitive fervour," had their faults, and the earliest writings of Christian literature blame their weaknesses. Christians nevertheless gave to pagans an example of a life surpassing that which usually characterised nature left to itself, good enough for them to notice it, and either to admire it or else to be disturbed by it.

### *The Accusations by the Populace*

"See how Christians love one another," they said; and on more than one occasion, when public calamities happened, they were able to see that Christian charity put itself at the service of all, whether believers, indifferent, or opponents. But principles of living in

<sup>9</sup> Funk-Hemmer, *Histoire de l'Eglise*, Vol. I, p. 312.

<sup>10</sup> *Ad Smyrn.*, VIII, 2.

some respects so new, and which were in so great a contrast with the easy characteristics of current morality as well as contrary to the customs of social conformity, could not fail to lead to an unfavourable reaction on the part of pagan society.

Not only did political authority condemn Christians as men who did not worship the gods of the Empire, and the higher and cultivated classes tend to despise them as groups in which the lower classes predominated and in which culture and refinement were not preponderant, but also the mass of the people, in spite of their admiring wonder provoked by the spectacle of a superhuman charity or of unheard of heroism, suspected almost inevitably, those who followed a life apart, separated from the common religion, of faults and vices, and even of secret crimes, and from suspicion to belief and then on to accusation, the passage was easy.

Atheism, since Christians did not render the homage due by all to the gods of Rome; magic, since they celebrated ceremonies which were known little or not at all; and cannibalism, and by extension, child murder, arising perhaps out of a wrong idea people had of the communion in the Body of Christ; scandalous indecencies again, for that is a charge easily hurled against those whose lives one does not like; such were the current imputations, combined moreover with less dangerous criticisms affecting the cultural practices attributed to Christians through unexpected confusions, such as the supposed adoration of a god with an ass's head—an ancient calumny of which the Jews had been the first victims and which was now revived against the Christians.<sup>1</sup> Who has not heard of the famous *graffito* of the Palatine, a chance inscription traced perhaps at the beginning of the Antonine era, by a sorry jester and representing one crucified with an ass's head, accompanied by the words: "Alexamenos adores his god"? To which the Christian thus teased by a fellow disciple of the imperial pedagogium replies with this tranquil affirmation of his faith: "Alexamenos fidelis."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On this, cf. P. de Labriolle, *La réaction païenne*, Paris, 1934, pp. 193-9, which gives more complete data on the question. Complementary indications in C. Cecchelli, *Noterelle sul cristianesimo africano* (Estratto dal volume *Studi dedicati alla memoria di Paolo Ubaldi*; Pubblicazioni dell' Università cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Ser. V: Scienze storiche, Vol. XVI, Milan, 1937), pp. 197-9.

<sup>2</sup> This very precious relic is conserved in the Kircher Museum in Rome. Bibliography on the subject in *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne* of Dom Cabrol and Dom Leclercq, Vol. I, p. 2041 *et seq.*

*The Prejudices of the Intellectuals*

Educated people entertained less inexact ideas about Christianity. Even so we know only too well the readiness with which men and women of the world at all times will believe the most unlikely stories about people who profess ideas which do not square with their own.

But, apart from excessive partiality or credulity, the sentiment entertained on the whole in the high social circles in the Empire in the second century concerning the Christians, most of whom were of humble condition, in spite of the existence of converts from higher levels, and without any claim to intellectual elegance, was one of contempt, tempered sometimes with a little pity, sometimes also with astonishment, like that which Marcus Aurelius felt in view of their desire for martyrdom.<sup>3</sup>

The *literati*, orators or philosophers in high repute under the Antonines, many of whom attained to honours, a Herod Atticus, a Fronto, a Claudius Severus, were also very ill disposed.

The polemic of Celsus, known to us by the refutation which Origen wrote of his pamphlet<sup>4</sup> in the next century, reflects in a way very instructive for posterity the complex sentiments entertained for a long time in the circles of imperial society with regard to Christians, sentiments in which a lack of understanding of the spiritual realities of the Christian life play a large part. Celsus especially criticises Christianity as being "a barbarous and absurd doctrine, suitable for people without culture,"<sup>5</sup> and as finding most of its recruits from people of that kind.

Contempt on the part of the aristocracy of mind if not of birth certainly occupies a large place in this anti-Christian prejudice. To this is to be added that of the philosophers, for whom the Christian beliefs lower the Divinity, or are against reason. But Celsus also criticises Christians because "they separate themselves from other men, despise the laws, customs, and culture of the society in which they live,"<sup>6</sup> as also knowledge itself. Far from allowing that the improvement in individual morality is in the last analysis good for the State, he sees in the Christian "chimera" only a public danger, for it attacks on points regarded as vital the social edifice, and "the

<sup>3</sup> Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, XI, 3.

<sup>4</sup> *Contra Celsum*.

<sup>5</sup> P. de Labriolle, *La réaction païenne*, p. 112.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 118.



civilisation to which it remains deeply attached.”<sup>7</sup> The numerous pagans who, animated with the same spirit as Celsus, continued to put the State, “the defender of the national traditions, and administrator of material goods, in the first place in their preoccupations”<sup>8</sup> could not agree with an affirmation of the superiority of the invisible world over the visible. Such a doctrine was to them unhealthy and even seditious.

It is not to be wondered at, then, that being thus in agreement with a public opinion inspired by mistrust, contempt, or open hostility, the severe legislation which denied to Christians the right to exist and held over their heads a constant threat of death maintained itself so long.

## § 6. MARTYRDOM

### *The Frequency of Martyrdom*

This explains also why Christians were always thinking of a possible martyrdom, and why we find among them a voluntary preparation for its calm or even joyful acceptance, and amongst many a positive desire for it. These characteristics constituted a definite feature of the life of the Church of the first centuries, and one which was none the less disconcerting to those outside, as it still is for many in our own day.

But in point of fact, during these two first centuries in which, by virtue of the principles of the Neronian decree as interpreted by Trajan, persecution was never more than temporary and sporadic, though in periods of greater frequency and length, martyrdom was not the lot of the majority of the disciples of Christ. Nero made a veritable massacre of Christians at Rome; the executions in Bithynia, in spite of the natural moderation and kindness of Pliny the Younger, made numerous victims, in proportion to the great number of conversions which had taken place in that region; apostasies were likewise not rare there. Lastly, the reign of Marcus Aurelius and the first years of Commodus undeniably constituted a particularly severe phase in the history of the development of Christianity, for in it we see hatred and severities increased against members of the Church in Asia, Greece, Italy, Gaul, and Africa.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 168.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 169.

But apart from these critical moments, though the danger never ceased for Christ's faithful, surrounded as they were by an atmosphere of hatred or suspicion, and threatened by an implacable law, yet the passage from hostile intentions to acts which set the law in motion took place only occasionally.

### *The Number of the Martyrs*

Were the martyrs in fact very numerous or not? This has been much discussed. For the first two centuries, when the Church lived under the sign of the Neronian *Non licet*, applied in the sense of Trajan's commentary, and did not suffer from general persecutions but only sporadic attacks many times repeated, the reply to the question is particularly difficult.

Out of the total number of martyrs attested by documents of relatively good standing, such as the *Hieronymian Martyrology*, it is not possible for us to say which ones belonged to these two centuries, for many of them are of unknown or uncertain date. The *Passions* which, for the most part, deal with martyrs appearing in the *Martyrology*, provide only a weak supplement for the historical information contained in the latter, as there is so much in them that has nothing to do with history.

On the other hand, it is at least to be supposed that everywhere there were some Christians who perished for the faith, from the time of Nero to that of Commodus, though their names have not come down to us. We may add that if we could count up all the martyrs, which would certainly be most helpful, this absolute figure would possess its complete significance only if it were accompanied by a relative figure, that is, if we could evaluate the proportion of the martyrs in relation to the total number of Christians. But this figure remains equally beyond our knowledge, and moreover it happily never ceased to vary, since we can affirm—and it is the only affirmation we can make here—that it was ever increasing.

Even so, very different estimates have been given. There is evidently a strong dose of rhetoric in the oft quoted passage in the *Apologeticus* of Tertullian: <sup>1</sup> "We are of yesterday, and we fill your cities, your islands, fortified towns, country towns, centres of meeting, camps, tribes, classes of public attendants, the palace, the

Senate, the forum; we leave you only the Temples. If we were to withdraw from amongst you, you would be aghast at your solitude." To this has been opposed another statement, made later by Origen, who seems to say that Christians were very insignificant in the midst of the tens of millions of men who peopled the Empire, πάνυ ὀλίγοι.<sup>2</sup>

We also get the impression, when reading the history of the martyrs of Lyons, for instance, of a little flock lost in a great hostile multitude. But how many of the Christians of Lyons were seized by the authorities and sent to their death? The Church of Lyons continued to exist, for it shortly afterwards addressed letters to those in Rome and Asia; a new bishop, Irenæus, took over its government, and the Christian life continued in the capital of the Gauls. It had therefore taken deeper and wider root there than one would be tempted to infer from the account of the persecution.

Moreover, the same Origen who wrote πάνυ ὀλίγοι also uses in another place in the same treatise *Contra Celsum*, the contrary expression, οὐκ ὀλίγοι.<sup>3</sup> and Tacitus had already called the Christians of Rome *multitudo ingens*.<sup>4</sup> The singularly rapid progress of Christianity in some regions, as in at least a part of the Asiatic provinces, cannot be doubted, since unbiased pagans such as Pliny the Younger testified to it,<sup>5</sup> and the declarations of Tertullian himself in his *Apologeticus* would have seemed to his readers somewhat of a mockery if the Christians in the western provinces of which he spoke from experience, namely, Italy and Africa, had been only a handful of men.

But the martyrs? We have seen that they shed their blood in all the countries of the Empire, intermittently, without doubt, sometimes in this place only, sometimes in that. At the same time, every imperial kingdom, or almost every one, and every province had its own. And at times, as under Marcus Aurelius, we find some in so many different places that we might almost think that there was then a generalised persecution, even though this was not really the case. All these groups of distinct martyrs together form a total which demands respect.

Besides, it is no mere conjecture that there were also a number,

<sup>2</sup> *Contra Celsum*, VIII, 69.

<sup>3</sup> I, 26.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 373.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *supra*, pp. 391-2.

perhaps a large number, of unknown victims. What liturgical, literary or lapidary text has conserved the name of a single one of the martyrs of Bithynia under Trajan? "How many times already has an archeologist not deciphered on a piece of marble sticking in the earth the names of martyrs that no parchment has conserved?"<sup>6</sup> De Rossi wrote sixty years ago: "The more I continue the study of history and of the monuments of the centuries of persecution, the more I am persuaded that the number is very great of martyrs whose names have not come down to us, and whose anniversaries are not indicated even in the rich and ancient compilation of the *Hieronymian Martyrology*."<sup>7</sup> The ancient inscriptions themselves allude to these anonymous heroes, whose names are known to God, *quorum nomina Deus scit*.

Lastly, this strong sentiment of expectant martyrdom, in which the Christian generations of the first centuries lived, could not be explained if the threat of death, following on denunciations which were at all times possible, had not only overshadowed them but also had over and over again been realised. This is perhaps the most decisive argument in favour of the thesis of the great number of the martyrs, that is, of a relatively very high proportion of Christians compelled to choose between confessing Christ and saving their lives. And that before this terrible choice, confessors were in a great majority over apostates, is a natural inference from accounts such as the Letter of the Church of Lyons on the persecution of 177. The letter of Pliny to Trajan certainly gives a different impression; without saying anything precise as to the respective number of the fearless and the weak amongst the crowd of accused persons brought before his tribunal, he says explicitly that he had succeeded in persuading many to return to the ancient religion, though this does not prevent him from expressing regret at the number of condemnations, still too numerous in his view, which he had had to pronounce. We may believe that the proportion of apostasies in the course of the first centuries and in the various parts of the Roman Empire was so much the higher as the Christian community put to the test was itself more numerous; there is generally more active energy and persevering courage in minorities.

<sup>6</sup> Paul Allard, *Histoire des persécutions pendant les deux premiers siècles*, 3rd edn., Paris, 1903, p. 477.

<sup>7</sup> *Bollettino di archeologia cristiana*, 1875, p. 179.

## § 7. THE VOLUNTARY EFFACEMENT OF CHRISTIANS

### *Christians Compelled to Lead a Retired Life by Pagan Hostility*

The constant threat under which they lived during the first centuries certainly had its effect in the voluntary partial withdrawal of Christians from the social life of the time. Causes and effects then, as often, reacted on one another.

Cut off by their beliefs and the precepts they obeyed from a certain number of practices inseparable from public or private life, the Christians appeared to be suspect; this suspicion involved their condemnation by public opinion and the law; this condemnation ended by relegating them to the borders of Society, for sometimes it caused their expulsion, as we see in the popular movements which expelled them from public places, and at others they themselves sought to separate and withdraw themselves from inquiries or dangerous curiosity.

### *Nevertheless Christians Were Still Found Everywhere*

Yet that is only one aspect of things, which may have seemed more striking at certain moments. The reality is often more complex and more resilient than the principles which seem to govern it; and we should be mistaken were we to picture the Christians as reduced to live like hunted animals, and the pagans as always ready to fall upon them.

If Christians were found even close to the throne, in the Palace and the Senate, amongst the representatives of the most prominent families and amongst the philosophers who taught in the Forum, such as the Flavian princes, Apollonius, Justin, and many others, the periods of respite for the various groups of faithful must have lasted for some time, and further, it is clear not only that people did not on every occasion seek for an opportunity to denounce them, but also that the authorities themselves, knowing over and over again the position of various individuals, intentionally shut their eyes to this.

This *de facto* toleration was accompanied by attitudes which were the exact opposite of a lack of interest in Society and public matters.

If Apollonius sat in the Senate, if Justin argued in the Forum, and if other disciples of Christ sat in the municipal curiæ, they evidently did not live as strangers to their city and their times. The statement of Tertullian as to the presence of Christians in all the spheres of general activity thus seems to be confirmed by a certain number of facts.

It remains true, nevertheless, that the rigour of the laws, the hostility of the crowds, or the sarcasms of the upper classes were constantly directed against men whose religion, which admitted no compromise on its doctrine and morality, kept them apart from their fellow citizens. In presence of the ever-threatening danger of an outburst of hatred and violence, and in spite of the acceptance in advance of martyrdom, which the most ardent went so far as to desire, but which the religious authority would not allow to be voluntarily brought about by provocative acts capable of leading to an unhappy increase in official measures against Christianity, it was necessary, if not always to dissimulate, at least not to advertise oneself. In particular, for reasons also of reverence towards the sacred mysteries, it became the custom not to celebrate religious services except when free from indiscreet curiosity.

## § 8. THE CATACOMBS

### *Christian Worship in Private*

Thus is explained the organisation by Christians of a part of their existence, at least in some places, away from the light, which they must nevertheless have loved like other men. They consented to spend underground the time they devoted to honouring God, so as to keep to themselves, and in periods of greater danger they spent more time there. But we must avoid a serious misunderstanding here: the usage made by Christians of catacombs at Rome and several other places, at Naples,<sup>1</sup> and Sicily,<sup>2</sup> in Tuscany,<sup>3</sup> in Africa,<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The catacombs of Naples are among the largest which have been explored, after those of Rome. There are those of St. Vitus, St. Gaudiosus, St. Severus, St. Euphebus, and St. Januarius. In the last mentioned, in addition to numerous inscriptions, paintings have been discovered some of which go back perhaps to the second century. Cf. Schultze, *Die Katakomben von S. Gennaro*, Jena, 1877, and *Bollettino di archeologia cristiana*, 1871, pp. 37-8 and 155-8, the account of the latest excavations by A. Bellucci, *Atti del III Congresso internazionale di Archeologia cristiana*, Rome, 1934, p. 327 *et seq.*, and above all H. Achelis, *Die Katakomben von Neapel*, Leipzig, 1936.

at Alexandria,<sup>5</sup> and in Asia Minor<sup>6</sup> was not at first due to a care for personal safety on the part of people who no longer dared to live in daylight, and it was only progressively that such use became frequent at Rome, if not almost habitual in times of crisis.

Christians had used private houses as their first places of worship, and apart from exceptional cases they were able to continue peacefully until the time of the great persecutions. The fairly numerous conversions among the aristocracy, particularly in Rome, resulted relatively quickly in their putting at the disposition of the Church some of their great houses which, with the atrium, peristyle and long chamber called the *tablinum*, lent themselves very well to the carrying out of the Christian rites. Penitents could there be separated, as well as catechumens from the faithful; if it was thought desirable, one side could be reserved for men and another for women, and the clergy could be installed in the *alæ* or wings. The use of private houses as places of worship lasted until after the second century, but other places were then also utilised.

### *The Origin of Catacombs as Cemeteries*

The Christian catacombs, which go back to the beginnings of the Church, were not always used for this purpose of worship. They were at first cemeteries.

Christians, who like the Jews always buried their dead and did not cremate them, had two kinds of cemeteries: those in the open air, usually in the East and in Africa, and subterranean cemeteries, which are found above all in the other Western provinces; these were given the name of crypts, *hypogea* or catacombs. This last term, used especially for the underground cemeteries of Rome, which were by far the largest of all, originated in one of them, situated in the neighbourhood of the actual Church of St. Sebastian, a few miles to the south-east of Rome, near to a depression in the ground which had caused it to be named in the Greek language, the official language of the Roman Church until the end of the

<sup>2</sup> Chiefly at Syracuse, where the catacombs are still more extensive than those of Naples.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. the nomenclature of the Italian catacombs other than those of Rome, in the *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne*, Vol. II, 1910, col. 2443-5.

<sup>4</sup> On the catacombs of Hadrumetum, cf. *supra*, p. 367, n. 26.

<sup>5</sup> *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne*, Vol. II, col. 2442-3.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 2442.

second century, *κατὰ κύμβην*, that is, in Latin, *ad catacumbas*. This underground cemetery "of the catacomb" was the only one opened in the Middle Ages, and its name was extended to all the others when these began to be rediscovered in the period that opens with the fifteenth century.<sup>7</sup>

The usage of underground cemeteries was not peculiar to Christians. The Egyptians and Phœnicians had already adopted it, and they had been copied by the Jews. In Italy, the Etruscans, whose eastern origin seems to be more and more clear, had left not far away from Rome numerous necropolises which in their deep caves and neatly hewn passages resembled small catacombs. Lastly, in Rome itself, where the practice of cremation was neither primitive nor general, and where certain families had retained or returned to the practice of burial, there existed some sepulchres which recalled on a smaller scale those of the East; such was the tomb of the Scipios. And the Jews, a large colony of whom had settled in Rome even before the Empire, also had underground burial places which were still more important.

It is not surprising that the Christians of Rome, whose first nucleus had been recruited from amongst the Jews, followed the same usages, and that those of Campania or Sicily did the same. But the Christian catacombs, especially at Naples, Syracuse and Rome, speedily attained to a much greater extension: in Rome, or rather round about it, for the ancient cemeteries were outside the cities, there was a veritable underground city, *Roma sotterranea*, which gradually grew larger, a city of the dead which began at the walls

<sup>7</sup> The first methodic explorer of the catacombs in modern times was Bosio, in the seventeenth century. His researches were continued in the second half of the nineteenth century by J. B. de Rossi, whose *Roma Sotterranea cristiana* (2 vols. and 2 vols. of plates, Rome, 1864-7) is still the chief work on the Roman catacombs. An abridged adaptation was published in English by J. Spencer Northcote and W. B. Brownlow in 1879. More recently, several volumes of popular information on the catacombs have been published: A. Perate, *L'Archéologie chrétienne* (the study of the Catacombs forms only a part of this), Paris, 1892; M. Besnier, *Les catacombs de Rome*, Paris, 1909; H. Chéramy, *Les catacombes romaines*, Paris, 1932; J. P. Kirsch, *Le catacombe romane*, Rome, 1933. The important works of Mgr. Wilpert on the paintings in the catacombs and on the sarcophagi, a certain number of which belong to them, are mentioned in the bibliography to this chapter.

Several reviews in various languages published by the different national groups of Friends of the Catacombs give information nowadays on the discoveries and researches which are always being made in the catacombs of Rome and other places.



of the living city, and extended away into the country to limits which we shall probably never know completely.

This extraordinary extension is explained both by the state of the Christians and by their faith. Christians, who believed firmly in the resurrection, had learnt from St. Paul that the body which is to rise again will be a spiritual body, compared to which the body of our earthly life is, as he himself says, like the seed as compared with the future plant. But nevertheless they had a profound respect for the remains of the dead. Such was the origin of the cult of relics, as also of the custom of going to pray near the dead, to meet at their tombs, and even to celebrate a sacred repast there. This was, it is true, merely the continuance of the pagan rite of the funeral banquet, which also implied a belief in another life. Thus Christians possessed a first motive for frequenting their cemeteries, namely, to meet together there and celebrate rites.

### *The Catacombs become Places of Worship*

The insecurity in which they lived, which was at least relative, and sometimes terrible, provided them with another. The friendly houses in which they met in the first period to celebrate divine service doubtless ensured a secrecy which seemed sufficient at first, and also safeguarded those taking part. But though respect for private property was great in Rome, it had to give way to the requests of the public authority. Arrests could be made even in private dwellings.

Amongst the private properties, some were especially sacred, namely, the burial properties. The respect with which Roman law surrounded the dead has received a new proof in the rescript of Augustus, reproduced in a Palestinian inscription recently published,<sup>8</sup> which lays down very severe penalties against the violators of tombs. Now, tombs were, at Rome and many other places at the beginning of Christian history, family properties: great families put their funeral grounds at the disposition of their brethren. The latter knew that not only would their dead be free from profanation there, but also that they themselves would, so to speak, be protected there by the dead. Thus when the Christians descended into the catacombs to celebrate their religious rites, this was not at first in order to hide themselves, although the catacombs provided a

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Bk. I, p. 292, n. 27.

material shelter, but it was both to honour their dead and to put themselves under their protection, which their sepulchres legally offered them, as a moral rather than a material shelter.

### *Development of the Catacombs*

Hence the great development of the catacombs, which soon underwent a tremendous extension.

Their use must have begun from the very first days of Roman Christianity, if we are to believe the tradition according to which St. Peter himself exercised his ministry in the Ostrian cemetery, near the present Church of St. Agnes outside the Walls, on the Via Nomentana.<sup>9</sup> We may, it is true, wonder whether, before they were disturbed, the Christians really adopted the cemeteries as meeting places. But even if the words of Peter did not resound in its galleries, the Ostrian cemetery is undeniably very ancient. The neighbouring catacomb, that of St. Priscilla, on the Via Salaria, the origins of which are linked with the mausoleum of the Acilii Glabrones, likewise goes back to the earliest Christian times.<sup>10</sup>

But others again have a no less venerable past: the Vatican crypt, in which were buried not only St. Peter, but many of his successors down to the end of the second century; the cemetery of Commodilla, on the Ostian Way, in which St. Paul was buried; the cemetery called that of Domitilla, from Flavia Domitilla, niece of Domitian,<sup>11</sup> on the Via Ardeatina; the crypts of Lucina on the Appian Way, put perhaps at the disposition of the young Church by the illustrious convert made by her in the time of Nero from among the high Roman aristocracy, Pomponia Græcina, and which were the starting point of the cemetery of Callistus, the official cemetery of the Roman Church in the third century, where numerous popes were buried. The cemetery of Prætextatus was utilised in the second century, and the body of a son of St. Felicitas, martyred under Marcus Aurelius, was placed there. Perhaps the first Christian tombs in the catacomb of St. Sebastian are not much less ancient.

<sup>9</sup> Tradition transmitted in a fourth century Passion, the *Acta Marcelli*.

<sup>10</sup> The identification of the cemetery "where Peter baptized," *ubi Petrus baptizabat, ad nymphas sancti Petri*, with the very ancient catacomb of Priscilla, proposed by O. Marucchi, has not received much support. Cf. J. Zeiller, *A propos de l'inscription damasienne de Saint-Sebastien*, in *Bulletin des Amis des Catacombes romaines*, 1933, pp. 272-7.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. *supra*, pp. 383-384.

## § 9. THE ART OF THE CATACOMBS

*The Decoration of the Catacombs*

Christians did not content themselves with depositing their dead in tombs, *loculi*, hollowed out from the walls of the long galleries of the catacombs, and framed sometimes in an arcade, *arcosolium*, under which a *mensa* or altar table enabled the Holy Sacrifice to be offered: the catacombs became veritable places of worship, and efforts were made to adorn them.

The paintings with which they were gradually covered count amongst the most precious sources of information left to us by Christian antiquity on the faith and religious life of the first ages of the Church.<sup>1</sup>

*Purely Decorative Paintings*

At first, these paintings were purely decorative. The pagans, Egyptians, and Greeks, Etruscans and Romans, decorated the underground chambers in which their dead rested. The Jews themselves, so opposed to pictorial ornamentation, set to work at Rome to enliven with paintings the caves of their catacombs. It seemed quite natural for Christians to do the same, and as the decorative motifs of the pagan tombs were much the same as those of their houses, so also was it at first with the Christians. The decorative artists of the houses of the great Roman families which created the first Christian cemeteries were called upon to decorate the catacombs, and they introduced there the then traditional motifs, inherited from Greek art, which we find in many houses at Pompeii, graceful and symmetrical lines, birds, flowers and vases, forming very pleasant wholes, but with nothing specifically Christian.

The same may be said of another kind of painting, full of interest moreover, and equally ancient, portraits and scenes from real life, such as the famous portrait of the fessor Diogenes, or a picture of the distribution of wheat to the people, executed in the catacomb of Domitilla for the college or corporation of the employés of the *annona*, that is, of the victualling service. In another part of

<sup>1</sup> The chief work on the paintings in the catacombs is that by Mgr. Wilpert, *Die Malereien der Katakomben Roms*. We must also mention, concerning the origins of Christian art, W. Elliger, *Zur Entstehung und frühen Entwicklung der altchristlichen Bildkunst*, Leipzig, 1934.

the same cemetery we see the Tiber market, at the foot of the Aventine Hill, but also Christ and the Apostles, in one and the same decoration. Were the artists who executed these works Christians? We cannot say so definitely. But at any rate the inspiration which guided them was at least respectful towards the Christian faith.

### *Religious Paintings*

The paintings of the catacombs soon manifested a more religious inspiration, and the Christian crypts began to reflect the ideas of the first Christians: the religious art, truly original, which arose in the catacombs, came from the piety of the faithful. But this piety, though deep and tender, remained for a long time discreet and, as it were, restrained; during the first centuries it expressed itself only with a pious and perhaps timid reserve and in a veiled manner; it abstained from setting forth always clearly the mysteries with which it dealt, and just as Christ had given a great part of his teaching in the form of parables, which were in fact transparent, so also it expressed itself by symbols, derived in part from traditions anterior to Christianity.

It is thus that in the second century, and still more in the third, Jesus was personified sometimes by the figure of the Good Shepherd, carrying, like the Creophore Hermes, a lamb on his shoulders, at other times by Orpheus, the ideal singer, who had descended to the lower regions and had returned thence. The lamb, who represented first of all the believer, the soul saved by Christ and led to paradise, soon became the divine victim, in accordance with the two evangelical symbols: "Behold the Lamb of God," and "Feed my lambs" (*John* i, 20 and xxi, 15).

Another symbol is the *Orante*, a female figure which, with its eyes upturned towards heaven and its arms raised, seems to implore mercy from God or to thank Him for His benefits; it symbolises also the human soul praying or entering into a blessed immortality, and it remains the most constant and the most traditional representation.

Numerous other representations, always connected with the work of salvation, were in use in the decoration of the catacombs: some, still borrowed from pagan symbolism, like the peacock, the emblem of immortality; the phoenix, the emblem of the resurrec-

tion; and the dove, the bird of the goddess of love but now the emblem either of the Holy Spirit or else of the soul; others again ingenious Christian inventions: the dolphin curled round a trident, a deliberate transformation of the cross or *Tau*, under which is also hidden the sign of the Redemption; the fish, whose name in Greek with its five letters forms the acrostic Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour; and again the ship, a figure of the Church, and the lighthouse which guides the ship to the harbour, and the anchor, which expresses Christian hope.

Lastly, in addition to symbolic figures, Christian art very soon shows traces of a veritable religious iconography. This primitive art did not confine itself to the one theme of hope in the future life, as though it had the essentially funerary character which was wrongly attributed to it at first. "A more careful interpretation of the paintings in the Roman catacombs as a whole has modified this point of view. From the end of the second century, in the cemetery of Callistus, the Chamber of the Sacraments presents themes which funerary symbolism no longer suffices to explain: what are figured are the essential doctrines of Christianity. . . . Already in the second century the figures appear which are destined to become the very centre of religious iconography: that of Christ and that of the Virgin."<sup>2</sup> Christ here is no longer the Christianised Orpheus or the Good Shepherd of the allegorical paintings; in the cemetery of St. Prætextatus, in which we see him healing the woman with an issue of blood, He has the appearance of a young beardless man with curly hair, clothed in a tunic over which is thrown a pallium enveloping the left arm, leaving the right arm free, and with bare feet.

The figure of the Virgin is fixed equally early. "A celebrated painting in the cemetery of St. Priscilla, which may go back to the middle of the second century, shows the Virgin seated, carrying on her knees the Infant Jesus. . . . Before her a man standing up and draped in a pallium is drawing a star. This scene has been interpreted as a representation of the prophecy of Isaias (ix, 2), who compares the coming of the Messias to the rising of a star."<sup>3</sup>

Other themes in the decoration of the catacombs, directed also towards the religious instruction of the living rather than towards the solace or the commemoration of the souls of the dead, Biblical

<sup>2</sup> L. Bréhier, *L'art chrétien*, 2nd edn., Paris, 1928, pp. 27 and 40.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

or evangelical episodes, or illustrations of sacramental doctrine, will become frequent, especially a little later on. But already in the end of the first century we can see in the gallery of the Flavians in the cemetery of Domitilla, Daniel in the den of lions, which we find again in the next century in the crypt of Lucina; and in the Capella Græca in the cemetery of Priscilla besides Daniel we have the history of Noel and the sacrifice of Abraham. The history of Adam and Eve painted on the vault of the vestibule of the cemetery of St. Januarius in Naples is of no less antiquity. The same is true of the baptism of Christ in the crypt of Lucina, the resurrection of Lazarus in the Capella Græca, the meeting between Jesus and the Samaritan woman, and the healing of the woman with an issue of blood at St. Prætextatus; and the twofold miracle of the marriage at Cana and the multiplication of the loaves, prefiguring the Eucharist, in a catacomb at Alexandria.<sup>4</sup>

### *The Sarcophagi*

Lastly although the reproduction of the human figure in stone was at first forbidden amongst Christians, as in Judaism, and because of a similar aversion for idolatry, the sarcophagi which were put in the underground caves of the catacombs were finally ornamented with bas reliefs. But the first examples of this Christian sculpture are not met with before the third century. Until then the Christians, reduced like all the world to utilising commercial models from pagan workshops, contented themselves with a plain ornamentation, usually of simple strigils. Very exceptionally they accepted sometimes an Orpheus or an Aaron, or even a Ulysses, attached to the mast of his vessel so as not to give way to the call of the sirens, in which we might see an allegory of the temptation.<sup>5</sup>

As for a Christian architecture, there was no question of such then, for the only places of worship were private houses or the catacombs.

<sup>4</sup> A German scholar, P. Styger, in a quite recent work, *Die römischen Katakomben*, Berlin, 1933, thinks it possible to give a much later date for a number of Christian cemeteries in Rome. These would go back only to the third, or more often only to the fourth century, and he thinks that many of their paintings, such as the Eucharistic Banquet, are only the representations of pagan scenes, without religious signification. But that seems to run counter to the evidence.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. J. Wilpert, *I sarcophagi cristiani antichi*, Vol. I, Rome, 1929, pp. 1\*-2\*.

## § 10. CHRISTIAN ECONOMY

*The Contributions of the Faithful to the Material Life of the Church*

During the first two centuries, the Church had for its upkeep only what the faithful put at her disposition. The Christian cemeteries remained private property, which their owners opened to their brethren living or dead. There was as yet no ecclesiastical ownership of property. But we may suppose that it was not the same in the case of goods of other kinds and of money. From the first, the Christian communities had their charitable treasury, filled by the offerings of the faithful. The *Didache* and the *Didascalia* mention the custom, possibly peculiar to the East, of taking to the Church and putting into the hands of the bishop the first fruits of the harvest. The *Didascalia* speaks of tithes. This contribution, which was subsequently to become obligatory, was first of all voluntary, and it does not seem to have been general even in the third century, much less in the second.

*The End of the Second Century Marks the End of an Epoch in the History of the Church*

But in the history of ecclesiastical property, as in that of the condition of Christians in the Roman Empire, the end of the second century is also the end of an epoch. The reign of the last of the Antonines was marked, for the first time since Nero, by an act of toleration towards the Church, although the previous legislation was not withdrawn. With the Severian dynasty, other initiatives will be taken, which will modify the regime to which the Church is subject. The relations between the Church, which does not cease to make progress, and the Empire, which goes through a deep internal crisis, will be different in the third century from what they were in the second.

CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS IN THE  
SECOND CENTURY<sup>1</sup>

## § I. THE ORIGINS OF CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS

APOLOGETICS, understood in its widest sense, is as old as Christianity; from the first, those who came to preach the good news did their best to prove its truth and answer the objections made against it. Many of the discourses of Christ, especially those He pronounced at Jerusalem and which are reported by St. John, are apologetical; as also are those of St. Peter, St. Stephen, and St. Paul, which we read in the *Acts*. Amongst the writings of the apostolic age, the *Epistle of Barnabas* has a plainly apologetic character. But it was above all in the course of the second century that this class of literature developed, and this calls for a special study.

*The Pagan Calumnies*

The history of the persecutions suffices to make us realise the necessity of an apologetic effort. Christianity, spreading throughout the Empire, met everywhere with hostility, not only on the part of the authorities, but also that of public opinion. Already in the persecution under Nero, the Christians were regarded by the populace as wretched people who deserved the worst punishments. In the *Acts of St. Polycarp* we find the populace taking the initiative in the measures against the bishop; when he appeared, they called for his death; a similar spectacle took place at Lyons in 177. This hatred had its origin in the calumnies spread everywhere, and

<sup>1</sup> Bibliography.—Editions: Dom Maran, 1742, edition reproduced in Migne's *Patrologia Græca*, VI; J. C. T. de Otto, *Corpus apologetarum christianorum sæculi secundī*, Jena, 1847-72, 9 vols. Literary studies: A. Puech, *Les Apologistes grecs du IIe siècle de notre ère*, Paris, 1912; A. Puech, *Histoire de la Littérature grecque chrétienne*, Paris, 1928, Vol. II, pp. 109-234. Theological studies: J. Tixeront, *La théologie anténicéenne*, Paris, 1905, pp. 221-46; J. Lebreton, *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, Paris, 1928, pp. 395-516. Dictionaries: E. Goodspeed, *Index Apologeticus*, Leipzig, 1912. Bibliographical indications special to each author will be given in the course of the chapter.



which for a long time were blindly believed.<sup>2</sup> The deadly and ever-present danger of denunciation compelled the Christians to hide themselves and to conceal from hostile eyes their meetings and their mysteries; but this very reserve caused mistrust; all kinds of suspicion were entertained about them. It was said that in the eucharistic supper a child was butchered in order to drink his blood, and that in the agapes they gave themselves up under cover of darkness to all sorts of disorders; even the terms "brothers" and "sisters" evoked in the pagan imagination the idea of incestuous unions. Minucius Felix in the first part of his *Octavius* sets out to reproduce these accusations, basing himself perhaps on Fronto; this indictment is too long to be given here in its entirety, but it will be useful to give some of its points. We must remember that the pagan into whose mouth Minucius puts his words belongs to the best Roman society and is speaking to Christian friends:

"How can we witness without pain the attacks against the gods made by this miserable, unlawful and fanatical faction? They collect from the scum of the populace ignorant and credulous folk and make them fellow-conspirators; in their nocturnal meetings, after solemn fasts and unnatural repasts, they bind themselves together, not by an oath but by a sacrilege; they are a race which hides itself, and flies from the light, silent in public, loquacious in their retreats. . . . They recognise each other by secret signs, and love each other almost before knowing each other; they are united together by a religion of debauchery, they all call one another brother and sister. . . . It is said that by some unheard-of folly they adore the head of a filthy animal (of an ass): a fine religion, and one well worthy of them! . . . Their rites of initiation are as detestable as they are known. A child covered with flour, to deceive the uninstructed, is presented to the one to be initiated; the latter, seeing only a floury mass, and thinking his blows harmless, strikes the unseen child and kills him. And then these wicked people greedily drink his blood; they unite themselves together by this sacrifice, and bind each other mutually to silence by complicity in this crime" (*Octavius*, VIII, 3).

These calumnies seem to us as foolish as they are odious, but in the second century they were spread everywhere, even in the most

<sup>2</sup> These calumnies, which are reproduced in all the literature of this period, have often been set forth, e.g., by H. Leclercq, article *Accusations contre les chrétiens*, in *Dictionnaire d'Archéologie chrétienne*; Harnack, *Mission und Ausbreitung*, pp. 513 et seq.

cultivated circles, and there was no apologist who did not have to refute them.

### *Anti-Christian Literature*

The pagan literature of the second century enables us to follow the progress of this anti-Christian propaganda; by contrast it marks the stages of the Christian conquest penetrating gradually all the classes of greco-roman society and there encountering an opposition which became more violent every day. The Christian Church in its beginnings was recruited above all from the lower classes: "See your vocation, brethren, that there are not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble" (I Cor. i, 26). The little flock kept this appearance for a long time; at the end of the second century again, Christians recognised it and pagans urged it against them.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless from this date educated circles had been reached by Christian propaganda: this penetration became evident in the reign of Hadrian, and much more so in the second half of the second century.

Pagan literature, which had long adopted a contemptuous attitude, began then to be alarmed: we find about 120 some references in Epictetus, then in Marcus Aurelius, Galen, and Aelius Aristides.<sup>4</sup> From the reign of Marcus Aurelius we get organised attacks: that of Fronto, the tutor to the emperor;<sup>5</sup> in 167 Lucian published his *Peregrinus*, in which he attacked mainly the Cynics, but also the Christians;<sup>6</sup> about 178 Celsus composed his *True Discourse*;<sup>7</sup> and all these writers were only the advance guard; behind them the historian sees an army of controversialists: Porphyry, Hierocles, Julian, and hosts of others. The fight continued without respite: it is still going on around us.

Against all these calumnies and attacks, Christians had to defend themselves; they felt the fearful weight of public opinion against

<sup>3</sup> Minucius, *Octavius*, V. viii, xii; Celsus, *apud* Origen, I, 27; III, 18, 44; VIII, 75.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Harnack, *Mission*, pp. 254 *et seq.*, 517; P. de Labriolle, *La réaction païenne, Etude sur la polémique antichrétienne du Ier au VIe siècle*, Paris, 1934.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. P. de Labriolle, *op. cit.*, pp. 87-94.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Zahn, *Ignatius*, pp. 517-28.

<sup>7</sup> The work has perished, but we find in Origen the whole process of reasoning, and even a great part of the text of Celsus. Cf. on Celsus P. de Labriolle, *op. cit.*, pp. 111-169. On this conflict between the apologists and educated people, cf. *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 396-400.

them, but they felt also the tremendous force of a pure doctrine and a holy life. And they did not confine themselves to defence; they attacked the immorality and the superstitions of the pagans.

### *Jewish Apologists and Pagan Controversialists*

In this task they had had forerunners; the Jews first of all who had also defended monotheism and attacked idolatry.<sup>8</sup> Amongst the pagans themselves the apologists could find many criticisms of idolatry and superstitions, to be utilised in their polemic.<sup>9</sup> Thus this polemic is the least original and least solid part in the work of the apologists; but on the contrary, their defence of Christianity is directly based on life; this is what gives it its persuasive force and, to a historian, constitutes the value of its testimony. The first Christian writers felt that they were despised by the educated world around them; but they were aware that they possessed a force which was worth more than all literature, namely, life. "Non eloquimur magna, sed vivimus."<sup>10</sup>

### *Apologetic of the Martyrs*

The martyrs, when called to appear before their judges, endeavoured always to defend before them the cause for which they were to die. Jesus Himself had done the same before Pilate, Stephen before the Sanhedrin, and Paul before Festus; the *Acts* of the martyrs show that these great examples were duly followed. But this apologetic, powerful because of the testimony which guaranteed it, could scarcely be developed: the judge usually cut short the words of the prisoner<sup>11</sup> and moreover circumstances did

<sup>8</sup> Cf. M. Friedlander, *Geschichte der Jüd. Apologetik als Vorgeschichte des Christentums*, Zurich, 1903; in this very full work the most interesting features are taken from Philo and Josephus; for instance, p. 289, Philo, *De Cherubim*; pp. 154 *et seq.*: the contrast between the religious festivals of the Jews and those of the pagans.

<sup>9</sup> J. Geffcken devoted himself especially to seek out these pagan sources in the work he has written on Aristides and Athenagoras: *Zwei griech. Apologeten*, Leipzig, 1907; a learned study, but marred by the author's antipathy against the Christian apologists.

<sup>10</sup> These words are from Minucius Felix (*Octav.*, XXXVIII, 6); they were repeated by St. Cyprian, *De bono patientiæ*, III.

<sup>11</sup> Thus in the *Acts* of Justin, the Scillitan martyrs, etc., Apollonius had a certain amount of freedom to expound his belief, and he profited by it; but he was a Roman senator, interrogated by the prætor, and treated by him with consideration which ordinary Christians did not receive.

not permit long speeches. It was therefore opportune and even necessary to compose works which could make known to well disposed pagans the Christian life and teaching. These expositions are of great value for the historian: he finds, for instance, in Aristides, in the *Letter to Diognetus*, or the *Apology* of Justin, excellent descriptions of Christian customs; Justin introduces him into the intimacy of liturgical assemblies, and there he is able to follow all the ceremonies of baptism and the Eucharist.<sup>12</sup> The sincerity of these pages is evident. At the same time, the desire to gain attention and sympathy is not without danger, especially in the exposition of the Christian doctrine: in order to render it, if not acceptable, at least intelligible to the pagans, there will occasionally be a temptation to modify it somewhat; we know how in Josephus the desire to defend Judaism in pagan eyes led more than once to altering its sense, by transforming the Pharisees into Stoics, the Sadducees into Epicureans, etc. The Christian apologists were more circumspect and more sincere, but they were exposed to the same danger, and the historian must bear this in mind.<sup>13</sup>

### *The Apologies, Their Destination and Their Object*

Several of these apologies are addressed to the emperors; it certainly seems that this was not a mere conventional formula, but that the writers of these books had in fact a hope, which may indeed seem chimerical to us, to be read by the emperors, to gain their attention and even their sympathy for Christianity. This desire enables us to understand the effort made by Justin above all in his second *Apology*, to set forth in Stoic language the Christian theology of the Word, and to make himself thus the more easily understood by the Emperor Marcus Aurelius;<sup>14</sup> hence also in the apology of Athenagoras the delicate flatteries addressed to Marcus Aurelius and Commodus;<sup>15</sup> these first apologists did not adopt towards the emperors the attitude of Tertullian; in the midst of

<sup>12</sup> These descriptions of the Christian liturgy have been reproduced and studied above, p. 463 *et seq.*

<sup>13</sup> Cf. *infra*, p. 560, and *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 400 *et seq.*

<sup>14</sup> Cf. *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, p. 437 and note 2.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Puech, *Les apologistes grecs*, p. 5: "When Justin asked the emperors to give the official stamp to his *Apology* (II, 14), he did not think in his simple mind that such a request was absolutely chimerical, however bold it may have seemed. . . . Why should Athenagoras have multiplied as he did his delicate flatteries of Marcus Aurelius and Commodus, and why should he have insisted on

persecution they believed in the reconciliation of Church and Empire, and worked for it.

Nevertheless, though this official audience was really in view, it was above all the public in general that was to be enlightened. The apologists had come from its ranks, they knew its prejudices and also its miseries, they wished to help it to become Christian, and realised what light and power they could bring to it; that is why they lay so much stress on the holiness of Christian morals, and the moral transformation which comes from Christianity.<sup>16</sup> In this great pagan populace, apologists after Justin single out the philosophic and educated public, and endeavour to reach it. They themselves have so long and so laboriously sought for religious truth; now they have passed from darkness to this wonderful light; they are aware that they possess a truth which the most exalted minds around them had sought but had failed to find; they realise through their personal experience how precious and indispensable this revelation would be to so many troubled minds, and they set it forth to them. This presentation may sometimes seem somewhat clumsy, but too much will not be made of this: it is not the talent of the writer which constitutes the value of these works, but the moral value of the witness; from this standpoint most of them<sup>17</sup> still draw the attention of the reader and please him.

### *Quadratus*

The earliest apologist we know of is Quadratus. He addressed an *Apology* to Hadrian (117-38); we possess of it only a fragment of a few lines, transmitted to us by Eusebius.<sup>18</sup>

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their justice, their enlightened mind, their philosophy, if he had not had some hope of being read, if not by them, at least by some of the magistrates who persecuted in their name? For such dreams to be abandoned, and for Tertullian to write that the very idea of a Christian Caesar or of an imperial Christian was an absurdity (*Apol.*, XXI, 24), a progressive disillusionment was required. Not Quadratus or Aristides, not Justin or Athenagoras could have given that trenchant statement of an inexorable conflict; however dark may have been the horizon in their day, their ideas were less proud and more confident."

<sup>16</sup> Justin, *Apol.*, I, xiv, 2; *Aristides*, XV, xvii; *Athenagoras*, XI, xxxiii; *Theophilus*, III, ix-xv; *Minucius Felix*, xxxviii; *Diognetus*, vi.

<sup>17</sup> All of course are not on the same level: one cannot compare Justin with his pupil Tatian, whose defection followed so soon after his *Apology*, which already contained indications of it; but Tatian is an exception in this group of early apologists; the others, so far as we know, remained faithful to the Church.

<sup>18</sup> *Hist. Eccles.*, IV, iii, 2: "The works of our Saviour have always lasted, for they were real: the sick He cured and the dead He raised were not seen merely

*Aristides*

In the same chapter, Eusebius<sup>19</sup> mentions an apology by Aristides. This work, addressed to Antoninus,<sup>20</sup> was long unknown; it has been rediscovered, in whole or in part, first in an Armenian translation, then in Syriac, and lastly in its original text, in the Lives of SS. Barlaam and Joasaph, in which a Byzantine hagiographer had inserted it.<sup>21</sup>

Aristides begins his work with an exposition of belief in God; a high and pure theodicy, but one which stays on the ground of natural philosophy.<sup>22</sup> Then, setting out to explain the religious beliefs of humanity, he distinguishes four races of men: the Greeks, the barbarians, the Jews and the Christians. This leads him to describe the Christian life, which he does in a beautiful and affecting way:<sup>23</sup>

“Christians are nearer than other people to the truth. For they know God and believe in Him, Creator of heaven and earth, in whom are all things and from whom are all things; who has no other god as com-

on the day of their cure or resurrection, but also subsequently; they continued to live during the earthly life of the Saviour, and even after his death they lived a considerable time, so that some of them have continued until our own time.”

<sup>19</sup> IV, iii, 3. Eusebius seems however not to have read it: he is mistaken in saying that it was addressed to Hadrian.

<sup>20</sup> Antoninus reigned from 138 to 161; in 147 he associated Marcus Aurelius in the government; the apology of Justin will be addressed to the two emperors; that of Aristides, addressed to Antoninus alone, is therefore previous to 147; this date is moreover confirmed by the description of the Christian life, which seems to indicate a relatively peaceful period, and also by the mention made (viii, 7) of great famines; this last fact seems a reference to the reign of Hadrian (cf. Spart., *Had.*, 21).

<sup>21</sup> An Armenian fragment was discovered in 1878 by the Mechitarists of Venice; the Syrian translation in 1889 by Rendel Harris in the monastery of St. Catherine on Sinai; J. A. Robinson, associated with the publication of this Syrian text, recognised the original in the Lives of Barlaam and Joasaph, ch. 26 and 27 (Migne, P.G., XCVI, 1108-24); this Greek text had indeed been fairly freely translated by the hagiographer; the comparison with the Syriac reveals notable omissions in it. The *editio princeps*, by Robinson and Harris, appeared in 1891 in *Texts and Studies*, I, 1, Cambridge; 2nd edn. without change in 1892. Ed. Hennecke, *Texte und Untersuchungen*, IV, 3, 1893; De Geffcken, 1907. A fair-sized portion found in the Oxyrhynchus papyrus has enabled the chief lacuna in the Greek text to be filled. This fragment was published by H. J. M. Milne in *Journal of Theological Studies* XXV (1923), pp. 73-7; it is translated above.

<sup>22</sup> This philosophy owes much to Stoicism, and also resembles Philo closely.

<sup>23</sup> This picture, which the Syriac version contains in its entirety, was shortened by the Greek hagiographer; the papyrus mentioned above contains the whole of the Greek text except the first lines, and confirms the testimony of the Syriac version.

panion; from whom they have received these commandments which they have graven in their minds and which they keep in the hope of the world to come.

Because of that, they commit no adultery or fornication; they bear no false witness; they deny not the deposits they have received; they covet not that which is not theirs; they honour their father and mother; they do good to their neighbour, and when they judge they judge justly. They adore no idols in human form; whatever they wish not that others do to them they do not to anyone; they eat no food offered to idols because it is impure.

Those who injure them they succour and make their friends; they do good to their enemies; their daughters are pure and are virgins, and avoid prostitution; the men abstain from all unlawful alliances and from all impurity; the women are similarly chaste, in the hope of the great reward in the next world; as for their slaves, if they have any, and their children, they persuade them to become Christians because of the love they have for them, and when they have joined them they call them simply brethren. They adore no strange gods; they are gentle, good, modest, sincere; they love one another; they do not despise the widow, they save the orphan, he who has gives without murmuring to him who has not. When they see strangers, they make them enter into their houses and rejoice at it, recognising them as true brethren, for they call brethren not those who are so according to the flesh, but those who are so according to the spirit.

When a poor man dies, if they know of it, they contribute according to their means to his funeral; if they learn that some are persecuted or put in prison or condemned for the name of Christ, they put their alms in common and send them what they need, and if possible they deliver them; and if there is a slave or a poor man (to be helped) they fast two or three days, and the food which they had prepared for themselves is sent to him, for they consider that they rejoice themselves just as they have been called to joy.<sup>24</sup>

They observe carefully the commandments of God, living holily and justly as the Lord God has instructed them; they give Him thanks every morning and at all hours, for all food and drink and all other goods. And if a pious man dies amongst them they rejoice, they give thanks, they pray for him, and they accompany him as if he were setting out on a journey. And if a child is born to one of them, they give thanks to God, and if the baby dies they give thanks still more for that he has departed without sin. And if a man dies in sin they weep as for one who is gone to receive his punishment.

<sup>24</sup> These two lines are lacking in the Syriac; Milne corrects *κεκληῆσθαι* into *κεκλημένοι* (*art. cit.*, p. 76).

Such are, O king, their laws. What good things they should receive from God they ask from Him, and thus they go through this world until the end of time, because God has subjected all to them. Therefore they are grateful to Him; it is for them that the whole universe has been made, and the creation."

We have purposely translated this beautiful passage here;<sup>25</sup> it is a precious document. Doubtless it has not the literary charm of the *Epistle to Diognetus*; its style is without art, its composition loose and embarrassed; but beneath its somewhat awkward simplicity the Christian life appears pure and sincere, as the Christians made a point of practising it. Tending towards the great reward which God promises them in the other world, they strive to live here below without sin, in joy and gratitude towards God, and in charity towards man. This last feature is particularly striking: in this pagan world "without affection, without mercy (*Rom. i. 31*), what a revelation and what an attraction is this spectacle of a life so full of affection and devotion!"<sup>26</sup> Lastly, let us note its first lines: these reveal the source of this very holy life: if Christians live thus it is because they "know God and believe in Him."<sup>27</sup>

### *The Letter to Diognetus*

To this early *Apology* we must join a document the date of which cannot be exactly determined, but which belongs without doubt to the end of the second century, or perhaps to the beginning of the third: the *Letter to Diognetus*.<sup>28</sup> In order to answer the questions

<sup>25</sup> We have translated it from the Greek text of the papyrus; in more than one point the Syriac, which the translators have generally followed, glosses it fairly freely.

<sup>26</sup> But to realise this programme there had to be, especially in the rich, a wonderful fervour; if this enthusiasm died down, it was quickly felt that this duty of assistance was a heavy burden; it is this weakness which was condemned by Hermas, *Shepherd*, Parable ix, 20, 2.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Puech, *Apologistes*, p. 43: "The best propaganda was the purity and charity of the primitive churches. The best apology was the depicting without rhetoric of these sweet and innocent virtues. We feel ourselves still very close to the apostolic age; we understand that primitive Christianity appears less as a new doctrine than as a new way of spiritual life, and a tremendous hope; and there is so little egotism in this way of speaking of oneself that Aristides succeeded in the most difficult thing in the world: the praise of oneself without surprising anyone."

<sup>28</sup> This epistle was found in one single manuscript, the *Argentoratensis*, 9, of the thirteenth or fourteenth century, burnt with the library of Strassburg on August 24th, 1870. It was put under the name of Justin, together with the



of his correspondent, Diognetus, the unknown author of this little work explains what Christianity is, what are its titles, and why it has appeared so late. The Christian life is described in a page which won the admiration of Renan<sup>29</sup> and of which Tillemont already praised the "magnificent and eloquent style."<sup>30</sup> In the construction of the work, with its parallel and antithetical members, we recognise the influence of St. Paul;<sup>31</sup> we find it still more in the exposition of God's plan, suffering for a long time the injustice of men, and repairing it finally by the incarnation of His Son:

"God . . . conceived a great and ineffable thought, and communicated it only to His Son. While He kept and hid His wise design in mystery, He seemed to forget and to neglect us. When He revealed by His beloved Son and discovered what He had prepared from the beginning, He gave us all things at the same time. . . . Having therefore disposed all things in Himself in union with His Son, He left us to walk as we wished until the present time, in a disordered manner, led on by our pleasures and our passions; not at all that He rejoiced at our faults, but because He bore with them; not that He took pleasure in times past, those times of injustice, but because He was preparing the present time, the time of justice, in order that, having been convinced

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*Discourse to the Greeks.* There is a lacuna at the end of chapter 7 and at the end of chapter 10, in the conclusion; chapters 11 and 12 are not authentic. This opusculum is found in the editions of the Apostolic Fathers, or in collections of the apologists.

<sup>29</sup> *Marc-Aurèle*, p. 424. He who could not forgive Christians for having been persecuted by Marcus Aurelius sees nevertheless in the author "an eloquent anonymous but fairly good writer, who reminds us at times of Celsus and Lucian": two unexpected comparisons, which are made mainly for the sake of contrast. For the rest, Renan recovers himself very soon, and after transcribing chapters 5 and 6, he draws from them an argument against the Christians: "When a society of men takes up such an attitude in the midst of the great society, when it becomes in the State a republic apart, even if composed of angels, it is a plague . . ." (p. 428).

<sup>30</sup> *Mémoires*, II, p. 371. Cf. Puech, *Apologistes*, p. 255.

<sup>31</sup> See for instance ch. V: ". . . They (the Christians) live on earth, but are citizens of heaven. . . . They love everyone, and they are persecuted by everyone. They are despised and condemned and put to death, and this ensures their life. They are poor, and they enrich others. They lack all things, and superabound. They are covered with insults, and by insult they attain to glory. They are calumniated, and a moment later they are proclaimed to be just. When harmed, they bless; they answer insult by respect. Doing only good, they are punished like malefactors; when punished they rejoice, as if life were bestowed on them. . . ." (Puech., p. 255). Cf. *II Cor.* vi, 9-10: "(We are regarded) as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastised, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as needy, yet enriching many; as having nothing, and possessing all things."

in the past by our own works that we do not deserve life, we might be judged worthy of it now through the goodness of God, and that having shown that of ourselves we are incapable of entering into the Kingdom of God, we might become capable of it by the power of God. When our injustice was complete, and it had been conclusively proved that the reward in store for it was punishment and death, then came the moment which God had reserved in order to manifest His goodness and His power.”<sup>32</sup>

We have here the reply of the apologist to one of the questions put by Diognetus: why did Christianity appear so late? What the author had said before (VII, 2) about the Word sent into the hearts of men seemed to prepare for another solution, that which Justin loved to develop:<sup>33</sup> our apologist has left it on one side, and to this difficult question he knows only the answer of St. Paul: “All have sinned, and do need the glory of God. Being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Whom God hath proposed to be a propitiation, through faith in His blood, to the shewing of His justice, for the remission of former sins, through the forbearance of God, for the shewing of His justice in this time, that He Himself may be just, and the justifier of him who is of the faith of Jesus Christ.”<sup>34</sup> This Paulinism is worthy of note in view of the circumstances and the date.<sup>35</sup>

We note on the other hand that, though the apologist speaks of the incarnation of the Word, he does not name Jesus Christ, and says nothing of His life, His miracles, His passion and resurrection. This silence is not peculiar to our author; most of the apologists follow a similar course, reserving doubtless to a later Christian instruction all the Gospel teaching. St. Justin departs from this reserve: while the other apologists stop on the threshold, he enters into the sanctuary of faith and takes his reader with him; for this reason and many others he deserves a specially careful study; it is he above all who will show us not only by his teaching but by the history of his conversion and by his martyrdom, what could be the place and work of an apologist in the second century.

<sup>32</sup> Ch. viii and ix (Puech, p. 258).

<sup>33</sup> Cf. *infra*, p. 551.

<sup>34</sup> *Rom.* iii, 23-26; cf. viii, 32; *Ephes.* i, 7; *I Tim.* ii, 6.

<sup>35</sup> We do not find it elsewhere in the group of apologists; and in the second century, in the Catholic Church, we can hardly recognise this Pauline influence except in Irenæus. But it would be an abuse of language to call the author of our epistle for this reason “a Catholic Marcion,” as has been done by Harnack, in his preface to his edition of the Apostolic Fathers, p. 152.

§ 2. ST. JUSTIN<sup>1</sup>*Life of St. Justin*

Of all the Greek apologists, St. Justin is by far the best known. Quadratus and Aristides are nothing more than names; Athenagoras and St. Theophilus do not appear much in their works; Tatian is less in the shadow, but he is known as a restless spirit who after defending the Church became the leader of a sect. Justin on the contrary is revealed in his works; he crowned his life by martyrdom, and his confession is known to us by authentic Acts; his friends and disciples, especially St. Irenæus, have testified to his merits and helped us to appreciate his importance. Not only is Justin one of the best known Christians of the second century, but also his apologetic work is the most complete that this period has left to us: the two *Apologies* addressed to the emperors are completed by the *Dialogue with Trypho*; besides the controversy with the pagans we can study the controversy with the Jews, and see in this way not only another side of Christian apologetic, but also another point of view on Christianity.

"Justin, son of Priscos, son of Baccheios, of Flavia Neapolis in Palestinian Syria"; that is how he presents himself in the first line of his *Apology*. He was therefore born of pagan parents, in a pagan city, but in a country which retained many vestiges of its Jewish past, and many memories. Justin left Palestine and went to stay some time at Ephesus; that is where he places his dialogue with Trypho; he dates it in the time of the war of Bar Kokhba (132-5); he was then a Christian; his conversion thus goes back at the latest to about the year 130.

*His Conversion*

The motives of this conversion have been set forth by Justin himself: in the first pages of his *Dialogue* he narrates his philo-

<sup>1</sup> Editions: Dom P. Maran, Paris, 1742, reproduced in Migne, *Patrologia Græca*, VI; Otto, *Corpus apologetarum sæculi secundi*, I-V, Jena, 1875-1881; L. Pautigny, *Justin, Apologies*, Paris, 1904; G. Archambault, *Justin, Dialogue avec Tryphon*, Paris, 1909, 2 vols. Chief studies: A. Puech, *Les apologistes grecs.*, pp. 46-147; *Histoire de la littérature grecque chrétienne*, Vol. II, pp. 131-70; G. Bardy, art. *Justin* in *Dict. de Théol. Cath.*, especially cols. 2242-62; J. Lebreton, *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 405-84, and in Cayré, *Manual of Patrology*, Engl. tr., pp. 114 *et seq.* A more complete bibliography will be found in these works.

sophical Odyssey: pressed by the desire to know God, he put himself first of all in the school of a Stoic; but very soon he found that his master "knew nothing about God, and even maintained that this knowledge was not at all necessary." A Peripatetic gladly welcomed him, but very soon asked him for honoraria; a Pythagorean required as an indispensable preparation the study of music, astronomy and geometry. A Platonist who then came upon the scene, fascinated the young man: by considering incorporeal things and contemplating the ideas, Justin thought himself quite ready to attain to the vision of God. But one day when he was walking by the side of the sea, he met a mysterious old man who destroyed his illusions and showed him that the human soul cannot attain by its own powers to the contemplation of God, but that it must be led thereto by the prophets.

Clearly we must not regard this famous page as an autobiography: there is here, as in the recollections of Goethe, "poetry and truth,"<sup>2</sup> all in it is not "truth," but also all is not "poetry"; the experiences of Justin are presented as an Odyssey through all the schools of philosophy in order to show their weakness, and to lead the reader to the Christian revelation. But the efforts made by the young Justin cannot be denied; this frequentation of the philosophers who had fascinated him for awhile had not left him merely with the memory of lost illusions; he understood, having once shared it, the enthusiasm of these philosophers, and especially of the Platonists, for the contemplation of the ideal world; he rejected their claim to attain to God by ecstasy, but he did not despise their aims or their endeavours.<sup>3</sup> From the first line of the *Dialogue*, Justin

<sup>2</sup> This is the title which Zahn has given to his study of these chapters: *Dichtung und Wahrheit in Justin's Dialog.*, in *Zeitschrift für Kirchengesch.*, Vol. VIII, 1885-6, pp. 37-66.

<sup>3</sup> Engelhardt (*Das Christentum Justins des Martyrers*, Erlangen, 1878), and still more Aubé (*Saint Justin philosophe et martyr*, Paris, 1861) regarded Justin as a half-converted philosopher who continued to teach within the Church Platonist and Stoic speculations. This is most unfair to Justin. Without going so far as that, P. Pfærtisch (*Der Einfluss Platons auf die Theologie Justins*, Paderborn, 1910) thinks that his theology was seriously affected by his Platonist formation; but this thesis also is an exaggerated one. Justin quite realised the fundamental lack of power in Platonism to elevate the soul to the contemplation of God, and the indispensable necessity of the Christian revelation in order to attain to it. It remains true that on some important questions such as those of the transcendence of God and the generation of the Word, he sometimes allows his theology, anxious to utilise Greek philosophy for apologetic ends, to be drawn on to the ground of his opponents. Cf. *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 422-8, 449, 452-5.

presents himself under their mantle; that is not a disguise, serving to draw to Christianity the Jew Trypho or others; Justin remains a philosopher, but the philosophy he professes has been learnt by him from Christ and the prophets, who in turn received it from God:

"That which we teach, after learning it from Christ and the prophets who preceded him, is the only true doctrine, and more ancient than that of all your writers, and if we ask you to accept it, it is not because it resembles the latter, but because it is true" (*Apol.*, I, xxiii, 1).

The ascendancy of religious truth was revealed to Justin not only by the theology of the prophets, but also by the life of the Christians. This other aspect of his conversion and of his apologetic is hidden in the *Dialogue*, but is brought out in the *Apologies*:

"I myself, when I was a disciple of Plato, hearing the accusations made against the Christians, and seeing them fearless in face of death and of what men dread, I said to myself that it was impossible that they should be spending their lives in sin and in the love of pleasure" (*Apol.*, II, xxii, 1).

These autobiographical fragments complete each other: the *Apologies* show us Justin convinced by the sanctity of Christian morals (*Apol.*, I, xiv), the *Dialogue* presents him as persuaded by the divine truth of Christian doctrine. These are the two great proofs which convinced him, and which he utilises in his turn in order to convert the Jews and the pagans.

### *St. Justin in Rome*

Justin lived at Ephesus apparently for a fairly long time. He went to Rome on two occasions, as he later on tells the prefect of Rome in the interrogatory which preceded his martyrdom; he lived "near to the Baths of Timotheus, with a man named Martin." There he had his school; six of his disciples were arrested and condemned at the same time as himself, about 165, by the prefect Rusticus, their names were Chariton, Charito, Evelpistos, Hierax, Pæon and Liberianus. They were slaves, or poor people, and the school of Justin was never so brilliant as that of Epictetus, or the conferences of Plutarch; it had no such influence as that of Clement of Alexandria or Origen. Yet it is of great interest to the church

historian; it throws some light on an important subject of which we know little: the organisation of Christian teaching in the second century.<sup>4</sup>

If this organisation was a slow process, this arose in great part from the character of Christian conversion: "Fiunt, non nascuntur christiani," wrote Tertullian. It was men already formed who came to the faith . . . those born in a believing family were rare, and also those who from their tender infancy received the seal of spiritual regeneration."<sup>5</sup> They were certainly rare, but not exceptional. In the interrogation of Justin's companions, Rusticus said to them: "Was it Justin who made you Christians?" Hierax answered: "I was already a Christian, and I will remain one"; Pæon said: "It was from our parents that we received this splendid profession of faith." Evelpistus replied: "I heard with pleasure the teaching of Justin, but it was from my parents that I also learnt to be a Christian."

These disciples were thus not catechumens; neither were they children: they were grown men who had received the Christian faith from their parents, and wanted to know it better. The instruction moreover was not reserved to Christians; it was offered to all: "to whomsoever was willing to come to me I communicated the doctrine of truth" (*Acts*, 3). Close to this house of Martin in which Justin lived, a Cynic philosopher named Crescentius likewise held a school. He was jealous of his neighbour the Christian master, and Justin expected to be denounced by him, as in fact happened.<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile he went on arguing: there was a public discussion between the two masters; the report of this had been kept, and in Justin's view it revealed the complete ignorance of Crescentius. The apologist asks the Emperors, if they have not seen the account of the debate, to have the latter renewed in their presence (*Apol.*, II, iii, 4). The challenge was not taken up, and the only testimony the Roman authorities were to receive from Justin was that of his blood.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Bardy, *L'Eglise et l'enseignement pendant les trois premiers siècles*, in *Revue des sciences religieuses*, 1932, pp. 1-28: "The Christian writers of the first three centuries rarely deal with these problems, and leave us almost completely ignorant of the way in which the children of Christian families were brought up and instructed," p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Bardy, *ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Apol.*, II, iii, 1; *Tatian*, xix.

*The Schools of Rome*

These incidents show how Christianity could then be taught, what were its fruits, and also what were its dangers. The latter did not terrify the Christians: in the midst of persecution, Hermas shows us the activity of the teachers in Rome;<sup>7</sup> in the middle of the second century Justin continued their work and extended it. His martyrdom did not destroy the teaching of Christian doctrine; Tatian, a disciple of Justin, continued it.<sup>8</sup> Very soon Tatian fell into heresy and left Rome; Rhodon, his disciple, carried on the teaching. He not only argued with the Marcionites: he also commented on the Hexaemeron and continued the exegetical researches begun by Tatian.<sup>9</sup>

The heretics also taught in Rome: the Marcionites had several schools there, in which divergent teaching was given: Apelles, who acknowledged only one divine principle, was opposed to Syneros who admitted three;<sup>10</sup> then the disciples of Noetus established themselves in Rome, first Epigonus and then his pupil Cleomenes.<sup>11</sup> These schools which sprang up on all sides show the interest aroused in the Church and outside it by theological problems. The bishop of Rome did not fail to interest himself in these matters: some Christians, desirous of following the teaching of Cleomenes, asked permission from Pope Zephyrinus to do so.<sup>12</sup>

It is difficult to determine the subject matter of this second-century teaching, and especially that of Justin. At Alexandria thirty or forty years later, Clement gave to his pupils an encyclopædic formation, and an introduction to all the sciences, sacred and profane. Origen adopted the same method, first at Alexandria and

<sup>7</sup> These *didascaloi* were mainly teachers of morals, or at least it was that part of their teaching which appealed to Hermas: *Mand.*, IV, iii, 1; cf. *Vis.*, III, v, 1; *Parables* IX, xv, 14; IX, xvi, 5; IX, xxv, 2.

<sup>8</sup> *Irenæus*, *Hær.*, I, xxviii, 1, quoted by Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.*, IV, xxix, 3.

<sup>9</sup> *Hist. Eccles.*, V, xiii, 1-8. In this chapter Eusebius quotes some extracts from the polemic of Rhodon against Apelles; he adds (8, cf. 1) that Rhodon admitted that he had been a disciple of Tatian; he mentions a work of his master entitled *Problems*; it dealt with obscurities in the Scriptures. Rhodon promised to solve these problems. This chapter, in spite of its brevity, reveals the nature of Rhodon's teaching: controversy with heretics, and biblical exegesis. These will also be the chief preoccupations of Origen.

<sup>10</sup> *Hist. Eccles.*, V, xiii.

<sup>11</sup> Hippolytus, *Philosoph.*, IX, 7, ed. Wendland, p. 240.

<sup>12</sup> Hippolytus, *loc. cit.*

then at Cæsarea. There is no proof that Justin gave such fulness to his teaching, and it seems hardly likely. It is more probable that he directed all his efforts towards demonstrating and defending the Christian religion; apologetics aiming at converting the Pagans and Jews, and controversy refuting the theses of the heretics, and in particular of Marcion. That is at any rate what we gather from the works of Justin, those which are still extant, those the titles of which are mentioned in ancient writers, and a few fragments. We shall examine this literature shortly, but we must stop a moment more at this little school. Justin was its first master, and he had sufficient influence around him to affect a disciple as independent and presumptuous as Tatian.<sup>13</sup> If we bear in mind again the veneration which a great theologian like Irenæus retained for the Roman master, we shall be careful not to despise the apologist-philosopher.

### *Works of Justin*

We possess only three works of Justin of unquestioned authenticity: the two *Apologies* and the *Dialogue with Trypho*. These works have come down to us only in a single manuscript, which is very imperfect, and contains considerable gaps.<sup>14</sup> This very poor manuscript tradition shows the lack of attention paid for a long time to the antenicene apologists. The controversy which they carried on against the pagans and the Jews seemed pointless later on, and attention was turned by preference towards books with an explicit and richer theology.<sup>15</sup>

Fortunately, this single manuscript has conserved what is of greatest value to us,<sup>16</sup> the apologetic work of Justin. Here we can

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Puech, *Apologistes*, p. 149: "Those who are inclined to despise over much the Christian philosopher of Naplouse should not forget that one who was able to attract to himself a disciple like Tatian must certainly have played a fairly prominent part in Rome, and to have exercised a real influence in some circles."

<sup>14</sup> This is the *Parisinus*, gr. 450, completed on September 11th, 1364. The *Dialogue* should be preceded by a dedicatory letter to Marcus Pompeius and probably also by an introduction; both are lacking. In ch. lxxv there is lacking a fairly large portion, containing the end of the first book and the beginning of the second.

<sup>15</sup> On this manuscript tradition of the apologists, cf. A. Harnack, *Die Ueberlieferung der griech. Apologeten. Texte und Untersuchungen*, I, i (1883).

<sup>16</sup> Among the other works of Justin, he himself mentions (*Apol.*, I, xxvi, 8) a "Treatise against all the Heresies." St. Irenæus mentions (*Hær.*, VI, 2) a treatise against Marcion, which was perhaps only a part of the preceding work. The *Sacra Parallela* have conserved for us some fairly large fragments of a *Treatise on*



study the most interesting and the most complete examples of the great effort of exposition and defence made by the Church in the second century: the *Dialogue* happily completes the *Apologies*, and shows us another aspect of the Christian demonstration.

In the manuscript, the three works present themselves in the following order: *Second Apology*, *First Apology*, *Dialogue*. Dom Maran (Paris, 1742) re-established the original order, and all later editors have followed him: <sup>17</sup> the two *Apologies*, or rather the single *Apology* composed of the book first written and of the appendix called the *Second Apology*, were written between 153 and 155.<sup>18</sup> The *Dialogue* is certainly later than the *Apology*; it seems prior to the death of Antoninus (161).<sup>19</sup> All this work thus belongs to the last years of the life of Justin. We find in it all the fruit of his teaching, and better still, the Christian apologetic as it was set forth in Rome towards the middle of the second century. We will now proceed to study this, without attempting to follow the books of Justin in detail.<sup>20</sup>

*the Resurrection* (Migne, P.G., VI, 1572-92). This work seems to be attributed to Justin by Methodius; it was probably utilised by Irenæus and Tertullian. Its authenticity appears, if not certain, at least quite probable. Bardenhewer (I, 228) regards it as quite certain; cf. Rauschen-Altaner, *op. cit.*, p. 75; Puech (*Littérature*, Vol. II, pp. 169-70) hesitates.

<sup>17</sup> This order cannot be doubted: the first *Apology* is quoted in the second (IV, 2; VI, 5; VIII, 1). For the rest, this second *Apology* is not a complete and independent work; it forms rather an appendix to the first: as something new became known to Justin, he decided to make use of it without rewriting his work.

<sup>18</sup> Christ was born 150 years previously (I, xlv, 1); Marcion had already spread his error everywhere (I, xxvi, 5); Felix, the prefect of Egypt (I, xxix 2), was in office in September, 151, probably since 150, and until 154 (Grenfeld-Hunt, *Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, Vol. II, p. 163, cf. p. 175).

<sup>19</sup> The *Dialogue* (xii) mentions the *Apology* (I, xxvi). It seems from this passage that the emperors to whom the *Apology* was addressed were still alive.

<sup>20</sup> Justin's method of composition is rather loose; it is difficult to give an analysis of his books following out all their deviations. We may summarise them thus:

*First Apology* (cf. Veil, *Justinus des Phil. Rechtfertigung*, Strasburg, 1894):

I-III, Justin explains his object: to enlighten the emperors, to discharge his responsibility, and place it on them.

IV-XII: 1st part or Introduction: the procedure of the persecutors is wicked: they persecute a name (IV-V); Christians are neither atheists nor criminals (VI-VII); they allow themselves to be slain rather than deny their God (VIII); they refuse to adore idols (IX, XIII); conclusion (XII).

XIII-LXVII: 2nd part: Exposition and Demonstration of Christianity. Christians adore God the Creator and Christ crucified (XIII); Christ is their Master; His moral precepts (XIV-XVII); the future life and the judgment (XVIII-XX); Christ is the Incarnate Word (XXI); comparison with pagan heroes

## *The Knowledge of God*

Before his conversion, what Justin sought for everywhere, in all the philosophical sects, was the knowledge of God. When he became a Christian, he found this knowledge there, and strove to possess it more fully and to give it to others. This must be our starting point in our study of his religious thought.

Of the philosophies he had passed through, only one had attracted him: Platonism. This had given him some idea of God, and had promised to reveal Him:

"Plato said that the eye of the soul is thus made, and has been given us in order that we might, through its own transparency, contemplate that true Being who is the cause of all the intelligible beings, who has neither colour nor form, nor size, nor anything of what the eye perceives, but is a being beyond every essence, ineffable and inexpressible, but the solely beautiful and good, and who appears suddenly in well born souls because of an affinity of nature and a desire to see Him." (*Dial.*, IV).

We note first of all in this text a statement of the divine transcendence. This affirmation will always remain an essential element

(XXI-XXII); superiority of Christianity; hatred of men and devils (XXIII-XXVI); purity of Christian morals (XXVII-XXIX); Christianity proved by the prophecies (XXX-LIII); two digressions: freedom and the prophecies (XLIII-XLIV); philosophy considered as Christianity before Christ (XLVI); the similarities we notice between Christianity and the philosophies or pagan mysteries coming from the devils (LIV-LX); description of Christian worship: baptism (LXI); the Eucharist (LXV-LXVI); the Sunday liturgy (LXVII).

*Second Apology*: injustice of the prefect Urbinius (I-III). Why God allows these evils; providence, freedom, judgment (IV-XII).

The *Dialogue* is much longer than the two Apologies (Migne, P.G., VI, 328-469; 472-800).

I-IX: Introduction: History of his philosophical formation and conversion; the knowledge of God; the immortality of the soul.

X-XXX: The Law. Trypho criticises Justin for not observing the Law. Reply: The prophets teach that the Law has been abrogated; it was given to the Jews only because of their hardness of heart; superiority of the Christian circumcision, necessary for the Jews themselves.

XXXI-CVIII: The Law given by Christ. Christ's two comings (XXXI); the Law a figure of Christ (XL-XLV); divinity and pre-existence of Christ proved especially by the theophanies (LVI-LXII); the Incarnation and virginal conception (LXV-); his death foretold (LXXXVI); his resurrection (CVI).

CVIII-end: Christians; the conversion of pagans foretold by the prophets (CIX-); Christians a more holy race than the Jews (CXIX); the subject of promises (CXXI); figured in the Old Testament (CXXXIV). Final exhortation for conversion (CXL).

in Justin's theology. We see there also the bold claim of Platonism to attain to God by the sole powers of nature; this claim will be rejected by Justin as an illusion. He himself once entertained it,<sup>21</sup> but Christianity corrected him. This is the theme of the first chapters of the *Dialogue*.

If we wish to understand the strength and danger of these illusions, we may recall a few statements by contemporaries of Justin. Apuleius, for instance, says:

"Plato . . . has often repeated that this one Being, by reason of the unbelievable and ineffable greatness of His majesty, cannot be grasped by any speech in any degree, so poor is human language; and that wise men themselves, when they have by great efforts separated themselves from their bodies as far as this is possible, conceive some idea of this God only as a flash of lightning, or the instantaneous bursting forth of a strong light in the midst of the deepest darkness."<sup>22</sup>

"The sovereign Good cannot be explained, but as a result of much intercourse He becomes present to the soul, and suddenly as a spark from a fire, a light shines forth in the soul."<sup>23</sup>

What these philosophers sought for and promised was the vision of God, which was suddenly to shine forth in the soul like a flash of lightning illuminating the night. Such was also the pretension of the mystery religions, but in the mysteries it was the rites of initiation that illumined the initiate; the Platonists thought to arrive at the same result by the desire and energy of the soul. The soul, they said, can attain to this because it has a natural affinity with the Deity (*Dial.*, IV).

It is on this point that Christianity as interpreted by Justin is clearly opposed to Platonism: the human intellect cannot see God unless it is clothed with the Holy Ghost (*ibid.*, IV, 1).

It must be noted, moreover, that what Justin excludes from the natural powers of the soul is the vision of God, not all knowledge of God. The old man who converted Justin to Christianity said to him: "I agree with thee on this point, that souls can know that

<sup>21</sup> "The intelligence of incorporeal things quite enraptured me; the contemplation of the ideas gave wings to my spirit, so that after a little while I thought I had become a wise man; I was even foolish enough to hope that I was going to see God immediately, for such is the aim of the philosophy of Plato" (*Dial.*, ii, 6).

<sup>22</sup> *De deo Socratis*.

<sup>23</sup> *Apud Orig.*, VI, 3. The same hopes are set forth by Maximus of Tyre to whomsoever desires to rise to God: Conference XVII, 9-11; texts quoted in *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 74-76.

there is a God, and that justice and virtue are beautiful." (IV, 7).

But this knowledge does not suffice for our religious life: what this requires is to know God as one knows a person, not as one knows a science: "to know a man, or to know God, is not the same as to know music, arithmetic and astronomy"; one attains to these sciences "by study or by exercise"; one knows a person "only by seeing him" (III, 6).

But how can we see God? The Platonist philosophers claimed to lead us to ecstasy by the simple play of our natural powers. That is an illusion. Must we then renounce any personal knowledge of God, and consequently, any religious life?

### *Divine Revelation*

This problem, which seemed insoluble, has been answered by God: He revealed Himself to the prophets, and the prophets have made Him known to us:

"There were of old, in earlier times than those of these pretended philosophers, men who were happy, just, and dear to God, who spoke by the Holy Spirit, and uttered oracles concerning the future which are being fulfilled now; they are called prophets. . . . They did not speak with logical proofs; above all such proofs they were worthy witnesses of the truth; and past and present events compel belief in their word. Moreover, the wonders they worked gave them the right to be believed, since they glorified the Author of the universe as God and Father, and announced the Christ who comes from Him, His Son. That, the false prophets filled with the spirit of error and impurity have not done, and do not now; they have the audacity to perform wonders to fill men with amazement, and they glorify the spirits of error and the devils. But above all, pray that the gates of light may be opened to thee; for no one can see or understand if God and His Christ do not give him understanding" (*Dial.*, vii).

This important passage sums up the whole apologetic of Justin: it explains the function of prophecy and miracle, and above all of grace. But before studying more closely the preparation for faith, we must consider for a moment this theory of religious knowledge. It is the first time we find in Christian theology so clear an explanation of the difference which separates divine revelation from human speculation; Justin recognises, as he should, that the human mind can arrive by its natural powers at a knowledge of God; but

he shows well that our religious life cannot feed on an abstract knowledge; man must enter into personal relations with God, and if he himself has neither seen nor heard Him, at least he must enter into contact with Him through the intermediary of those who are His witnesses, and the depositaries of His revelations.

This divine origin gives to Christian doctrine an authority which no other teaching can claim:

"That which we teach, after learning it from Christ and the prophets who preceded Him, is the only true doctrine, and more ancient than that of all your writers, and if we ask you to accept it, it is not because it resembles the latter, but because it is true."<sup>24</sup>

### *Christianity and Philosophy*

These categorical affirmations express a very definite aspect of Justin's thought: if he himself has accepted Christianity, and if he presses his readers to accept it in their turn, it is not because Christianity can claim the patronage of philosophers, but because it comes from God, and because it is true in consequence. At the same time, he delights, especially in the *Apology*, to show that the philosophers often resemble Christians by their life, by the persecutions they have undergone, and even by the doctrine they have professed:

"Those who have lived according to the logos are Christians, even though they have been regarded as atheists: such were among the Greeks, Socrates, Heraclitus and their like; amongst the barbarians, Abraham, Ananias, Azarias, Misael, and many others whose names and actions we know, but it would take too long to recall here" (*Apol.*, I, xlv, 3).

To explain this propagation of Christian principles within paganism, Justin points out first of all that the Word of God enlightens all men.<sup>25</sup> All share in the truth which He teaches; but the Chris-

<sup>24</sup> *Apol.*, I, xxiii, 1. With these texts of the *Dialogue* and the *Apology* we can compare this fragment of the *Treatise on the Resurrection*: "The doctrine of truth is open and free, and does not agree to submit itself to examination. . . . The truth is God Himself, it is from Him that this doctrine comes, and consequently, this freedom is not insolence." Of course, Christian doctrine does not seek to withdraw from examination the proofs of its divine origin, but once this origin has been recognised, the human mind must submit itself to the revelation of God.

<sup>25</sup> "We say that Christ was born a hundred and fifty years ago. . . . It is objected that all those who lived before him were irresponsible; we hasten to resolve this difficulty: Christ is the first-born of God, His Word, in which all men share" (*ibid.*, xlv, 1-2; cf. II, viii, 1).

tians alone possess it in its fulness; hence the transcendence of their doctrine:

"Our doctrine surpasses every human doctrine, because we have the whole of the *logos*: Christ, who appeared for us, body, word and soul. For all that the philosophers and legislators have said or managed to discover, they were able to discover and contemplate it thanks to a partial influence of the *logos*. But because they have not known the whole of the *logos*, who is the Christ, they have often contradicted themselves" (*ibid.*, II, x, 1-3).

Thus "all that has ever in the whole human race been well said belongs to us Christians (II, xiii, 4); the contradictions and errors which disfigure these truths come from human weakness, which apart from Christianity has received from the Word only a partial communication, and has mixed corruptions with it."<sup>26</sup>

These principles explain and justify Justin's attitude of great sympathy and great independence towards Greek philosophy; he delights to see in its most illustrious masters, Heraclitus, Socrates and above all Plato, disciples of the Word; but no one is a master for him; he will repeat with the old man who converted him: "I do not trouble about Plato or Pythagoras" (*Dial.*, vi, 1). He knows that he has received in Christianity the complete revelation of the Word, of whom the greatest among the pagans received only a partial communication; he delights to discover these portions in them; but he will not be envious of them, knowing that he himself possesses the whole.<sup>27</sup>

The explanation which we have just reproduced enables us to

<sup>26</sup> "I am a Christian and I confess that all my desire and effort is to be recognised as a Christian. Not that the teachings of Plato are wholly foreign to those of Christ, but they are not wholly like them, any more than are those of the others, Stoics, poets and writers. Each of them, indeed, thanks to a partial participation of the divine seminal *logos*, well realised what was in conformity with (the partial *logos* he possessed); but as they contradict one another on very important matters, it is clear that they do not possess infallible science and irrefutable knowledge" (II, xiii, 2-3). The conception of the "seminal *logos*" to which Justin appeals, especially in the second *Apology*, in order to explain this participation, is of Stoic origin; coming from a materialistic and pantheistic philosophy, it retains its impress; Justin does violence to it in order to adapt it to his Christian faith; but he could not entirely succeed. Cf. *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 434-9.

<sup>27</sup> Amongst the criticisms which the old man makes of philosophy as Justin represents it before his conversion is this: "Is it then the discourse that thou lovest, and not action or truth? Hast thou not a desire to act rather than to reason?" (*Dial.*, iii, 3).

understand the origin of the truths scattered in paganism; it also at the same time reveals the deepest thought of Justin. Yet more than once the apologist has recourse to a hypothesis which the Jews had employed and which Christians had often borrowed from them: if we discover more than one similitude between the doctrines and rites of the pagans and those of the Christians, it is because of conscious or unconscious plagiarism on the part of the pagans. Plato said that God fashioned formless matter in order to make the world; it was from Moses that he learnt this (*Apol.*, I, lix, 1-5). The same applies to the final conflagration, affirmed by the Stoics, after Moses (*ibid.*, lx, 8); "it is not we who reproduce what the others have said, but the others who copy what we say" (*ibid.*, x).<sup>28</sup>

This hypothesis of plagiarism was decidedly weak; Justin received it from his predecessors; he reproduced it, but at least he enriched it with a remark which gives it more value: "Amongst ourselves one can hear and learn these things from those who do not know even how to write; these are ignorant people, barbarous in language, but wise and faithful in spirit . . . and we see well that we have here not a work of human wisdom, but of divine power" (*ibid.*, lx, 11).

Whence comes this transcendence of Christian truth, affirmed with such certitude in face of all the philosophies? Justin affirms that "we alone prove what we affirm." What are these proofs?

### *The Argument from Prophecy*

The fundamental proof for Justin, as for the other apologists of this period, is prophecy. We have already noted this in the preface to the *Dialogue*; the *Apology* is no less explicit. Here is the way in which the argument from prophecy is set forth to the pagans:

"There were amongst the Jews prophets of God, by whom the prophetic Spirit announced in advance future events. The kings who reigned over the Jews in the time of the prophets kept the prophecies as they had been pronounced, in books written in Hebrew by the prophets themselves. Now when Ptolemy, King of Egypt, wished to found a library in which he could gather together the works of all writers, he became aware of these prophecies. He sent to ask Herod,

<sup>28</sup> "The evil spirits have imitated the institution of the Eucharist in the mysteries of Mithra" (lxvi, 4).

who reigned then in Judea, to send him these books. King Herod sent them to him written, as I have said, in Hebrew. As the Egyptians did not understand this language, Ptolemy asked him for men capable of translating these books into Greek. The work was carried out; the books are still to-day in the hands of the Egyptians, and everywhere in the hands of the Jews; but the Jews read them without understanding them. They look upon us as their enemies and opponents, and like you they kill and persecute us when they can. And yet, in the books of the prophets, we see it foretold that Jesus, our Christ, is to come, to be born of a virgin, to arrive at man's age, to heal all sickness and all infirmity, to raise the dead, to be hated, misunderstood, crucified, to die, to rise again, to ascend to heaven. We read that He is, and that He is called Son of God, that men sent by him will preach these things to the whole human race, and that it will be above all the gentiles who will believe in him. These prophecies were made long before his coming, some five thousand years before, others three thousand, others again two thousand or a thousand or eight hundred years; for the prophets succeeded one another from generation to generation" (*Apol.*, I, xxv).

We will not dwell on the strange anachronism which makes King Herod the contemporary of Ptolemy Philadelphus,<sup>29</sup> but we note the value attached by Justin, and by all Christian apologists as well, to the Septuagint translation: In relation to the Jews and pagans it is a very effective instrument; being prior to Christianity and established by the Jews, this Greek text gives to Christian reasoning an incontestable starting point. It is still more important to notice how Justin understands prophecy: he seeks it not only in the books which the Jews recognise as having been written by the prophets, Isaias, Jeremias and others; he finds it throughout the Bible, and first of all in the books of Moses, the "first of the prophets," and the one whom in fact he most frequently quotes. The texts he quotes are not only formal predictions, but quite as often stories the symbolical signification of which refers to Christ. The prophetic argument understood in this way does not depend on a few passages in the Bible, but on the Bible whole and entire; histories, poems, prayers, all tend towards Christ. This conception, inspired by St. Paul, is legitimate and fruitful; in Justin it will sometimes be weakened by questionable interpretations and by un-

<sup>29</sup> On the Septuagint translation and the progressive development of the legend concerning it, see Tramontano, *La Lettera di Aristea a Filocrate*, 1931, pp. 122 et seq.



satisfactory arguments, but these faults of detail cannot seriously compromise the value of the whole.

The great importance which the apologist attaches to this argument appears first of all in the way in which he develops it. He devotes to it more than a third of the *Apology* (ch. xxx-liii) and almost the whole of the *Dialogue*. The form of the argument varies from one work to the other, according to the dispositions of the opponent in view. The pagans do not recognise the Bible as a book inspired by God, and so Justin cannot draw from it an argument from authority as he will do in the case of the Jews; he contents himself, as we have seen, with showing them that the books of the prophets are much anterior to Christ, that the authenticity of the text and the correctness of the translation are guaranteed by the Jews, and that these writings contain prophecies concerning the life of Christ and the expansion of his teaching which can be explained only by their divine origin. It must be remembered that most pagans were very susceptible to this kind of argument; many believed in the oracles of the Greek or Latin religions, and thus were not inclined to reject *a priori* all prophecy.<sup>30</sup>

Certainly the distance was great between these pagan oracles and the Biblical prophecies; and the difference was not less profound between the Stoic divination and the Christian theology of inspiration. But both sides agreed in recognising the reality of the predictions, and the action of God in them. And once the pagans had been led to admit the reality of the prophecies of Israel, it was not difficult to lead them on to acknowledge the doctrine preached by the prophets.

In the *Dialogue*, Justin is arguing with the Jews, and can take for granted the divine origin of the revelation and the sacred character of the Biblical writings. Strong in this belief, and enlightened by the light of Christ, he seems sometimes to regard his arguments as irresistible for those of good faith: "Pay attention to the testimonies I am going to quote: they need no commentary, it suffices

<sup>30</sup> For the Stoic philosophers, the effectiveness of divination was one of the best loved theses, and the evidence seemed to them so irresistible on this point that they preferred to prove thereby the existence of a divinity and a Providence (Cicero, *De natura deorum*, II, v, 13; lxv, 162; *De divinatione*, I, v, 9; xxxviii, 82). Marcus Aurelius, the emperor addressed by Justin and later on by Athenagoras, has left us in his *Meditations* (IX, 27) an expression of his belief in dreams and divination. Plutarch equally believed in them (*De defectu oracul.*, IX; *De Pyth. orac.*, XVII, XX), and sought the explanation of phenomena he did not dream of denying in the activity of spirits or emanations from the earth.

to hear them" (*Dialogue*, lv, 3). But often also he shows that this interpretation is difficult to grasp: "Thou sayest, and we also agree, that all the words and actions of the prophets have a symbolical and typical signification, so that most of them are not easily understood by all, because the truth is hidden in them, and those who seek it must make many efforts in order to find and understand it" (*ibid.*, xc, 2).

He even holds that the prophecies as a whole have been understood only since Christ, and thanks to Him, and for this reason he calls Him the interpreter of hidden prophecies (*Apoc.*, I, xxxii, 2; cf. *Dial.*, c, 2). The teaching given by the Master does not suffice for this, any more than his example and his life: there are required also in a man moral dispositions, and the grace of God. Those only can understand the prophets who are ready to suffer what the prophets suffered. "Ask above all," says the old man to Justin, "that the gates of light may be opened to thee, for none can see or understand these things if God and His Christ do not give him the grace to do so" (*Dial.*, vii, 3; cf. xxix, 5). And again: "If anyone has not received from God a great grace in order to understand what has been said and done by the prophets, it will be useless to read their words or the accounts of their works, for he will not be able to explain them" (xcii, 1).

### *The Argument from Miracles*

Together with prophecies, Justin presents miracles as a proof of the Christian revelation. We have found this already in the passage quoted above (*Dial.*, vii, 3) concerning the wonders wrought by the prophets in testimony of their doctrine. The mission of Christ was likewise confirmed by His works, and by the marvels which are still being performed in His name (xxxv, 8). Justin returns to this later on with more emphasis:

"Christ healed those who according to the flesh were blind, deaf or lame from birth, making them to see, hear, or walk by His word. Indeed, He even raised some from the dead and brought them back to life; and by His works He confounded His contemporaries and called upon them to recognise Him, but they, seeing all these things, attributed them to a magical power, for they dared to call Him a magician and seducer. He Himself performed these works also in order to show those who were to believe in Him that if anyone has a bodily infirmity,

He will make him perfectly whole again at His second coming by raising him up and freeing him from death, corruption and pain" (lxix, 6-7).

It must be recognised that in Justin and the other apologists of that period, the form of the argument is quite different from that of our own time, and supposes different preoccupations.

All our effort nowadays is directed to obtaining the recognition of a fact (a cure, resurrection, or prophecy) as supernatural; in the second century this point was not the most difficult to get recognised; people found no great difficulty in allowing an activity superior to that of natural agents, but the whole problem was to discern the origin of these supernatural activities.

It was the period in which Alexander of Abonouteichos deceived Marcus Aurelius himself by his illusions, and married Rutilianus the consul to a daughter whom he claimed to have had from the moon.<sup>31</sup> It was also the time when the Gnostic Mark was multiplying the feats of magic related by St. Irenæus (I, xiii), and which astonished the faithful.

Moreover, the apologists found no difficulty in recognising the extraordinary power of the evil spirits. Tatian explains thus, according to St. Justin, the marvellous cures they brought about:

"The evil spirits do not cure, they captivate men by cunning, and the excellent Justin has rightly said that they are comparable to brigands. For as the latter are accustomed to make captives and to give them back afterwards to their relatives in exchange for a ransom, so also these pretended divinities slip into the members of certain men, then by dreams make them believe in their power, command their sick to appear in public in the sight of all, and after enjoying the praises given to them, they fly out of the bodies of their sick, putting an end to the malady which they had themselves caused, and re-establishing the men in the primitive condition" (XVIII).<sup>32</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Lucian, *Alexander*, XLVIII, XXXV.

<sup>32</sup> So also St. Irenæus, when combating the disciples of Simon and Carpocrates, insists on showing that their marvels have not the same character as the miracles of Christ and of Christians: "They cannot give back sight to the blind, or hearing to the deaf; they cannot expel evil spirits, save perhaps those they have themselves introduced; they cannot heal the sick, the lame, the paralytics, the cripples. . . . As for resurrections, they are so far from being able to do it that they do not think it in any way possible. But the Lord did this, as also did the apostles by their prayers, and often, amongst the brethren, in cases of necessity, the whole Church of the place prays, fasts and beseeches, and the spirit of the dead man comes back, and the man is restored at the prayers of the saints" (II, xxxi, 2).

The superiority of Christ over the evil spirits is shown especially by the exorcisms: the pagans were struck by this, and the apologists recall it with insistence. Thus Justin, in his *Second Apology* (VI, 5-6):

"Christ became man, and was born, by the will of God the Father, for the salvation of believers and the destruction of evil spirits; now you can still convince yourselves of this by what happens beneath your eyes. In the whole world, and in your own city, there are many demoniacs whom neither adjurations nor enchantments nor philtres have been able to cure: many of our Christians, adjuring them in the name of Jesus Christ crucified under Pontius Pilate, have cured them and still cure them to-day, by mastering and expelling the evil spirits who possess them."

### *Christian Morals*

But of all these miraculous works, that on which Justin dwells for preference, and which is indeed the most clearly divine, is the moral transformation brought about by Christianity. He himself, we recall, had been won to the Christian faith by the heroism of the martyrs (*Apol.*, II, xii, 1). He never tires in his *Apology* of offering to the pagans this decisive proof of the holiness of his religion. He presents Christians to them as men who do not fear death,<sup>32</sup> who prefer truth to life, and who at the same time wait without anticipating the hour when God will call them;<sup>34</sup> they are devoted to their children (*Apol.*, I, xxvii); they are chaste;<sup>35</sup> they are peaceful

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The apologist of the *Clementine Recognitions* (III, lx) stresses still more the beneficial character of true miracles; he makes St. Peter speak thus: "Tell me, what is the use of making statues walk, dogs of bronze or stone bark, mountains leap and fly in the air, or a thousand other marvels of this kind, which you attribute to Simon? But the works of him who is good have for their object the well being of men, like the works which Our Lord did, making the blind to see, the deaf to hear, curing the sick and the lame, putting to flight the maladies and evil spirits, raising the dead, and doing many other things which you see me also doing." Cf. Athenagoras, *Legat.*, xxiii; Tertullian, *Apol.*, xxii; Minucius Felix, *Octav.*, xxvii.

<sup>32</sup> *Apol.*, I, ii, 4; xi, 1-2; xlv, 6; II, ii, 14; *Dial.*, xxx, 2.

<sup>34</sup> *Apol.*, II, iv.

<sup>35</sup> *Apol.*, I, xxix: "If we marry, it is to bring up our children; if we renounce marriage, it is in order to keep perfect continence." This exigence and this virtue of Christianity appear in the fact which gave rise to the *Second Apology*: a woman had lived in vice with her husband; she was converted to Christianity, and "considered that it was an impiety to share the couch of a man who sought by all

(I, xxxix, 3); they love their enemies and endeavour to save them (I, lvii, 1; *Dial.*, cxxxiii, 6); in persecution they are patient, they pray, they love all men.<sup>36</sup> Hence it is useless to persecute them unto death; the Church flourishes like a vine that is pruned:

"We are beheaded, we are crucified, we are delivered to wild beasts, to chains, to the fire, and to all torments, and you see that we do not renounce the profession of our faith; on the contrary, the more we are persecuted, the greater becomes the number of those who, through the name of Jesus, become faithful and pious. When people cut off from a vine the branches that have borne fruit, other shoots appear, flourish, and bear fruits; it is the same with us. The vine planted by Christ, God and Saviour, is his people" (*Dial.*, cx, 4).

This pure morality, this fruitful life, have their source in the teaching and grace of Christ:

"Previously we took pleasure in debauchery; now chastity constitutes our whole delight; once we practised magic, now we are consecrated to the good and unbegotten God. We were greedy for money and possessions; now we put in common what we possess, and share it with whoever is in want. Hatred and murders opposed us to each other; difference in manners prevented us from receiving the stranger in our homes; now, after the appearance of Christ, we live together, we pray for our enemies, we try to win our unjust persecutors, in order that those who live in conformity with the sublime doctrine of Christ may hope for the same rewards as us from God, the Master of the world" (*Apol.*, I, xiv, 2-13).

And he continues, quoting abundantly the moral precepts of Jesus, especially the Sermon on the Mount (*ibid.*, xv-xviii).

Thus is developed this apologetic demonstration, modest and restrained yet strong in a tranquil and irresistible assurance. Justin has not the sarcastic liveliness of Tatian, nor the passionate eloquence of Tertullian. To the odious calumnies spread against Christians he sometimes replies, like the other apologists, by taking the offensive, and reproaching the pagans for their immorality (*Apol.*, I, xxvii; II, xx, 4-5); but he does not dwell on these obscenities; the interlocutor in the *Dialogue* protests that he does not believe

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means, pleasures contrary to the natural law and to justice"; she tried in vain to convert her husband; finally she separated from him. She was then denounced by him as a Christian (*Apol.*, II, ii).

<sup>36</sup> *Dial.*, xciii, 3.

in the stories told about the Christians (x, 2); the friends who accompany Justin and who disturb the discussion by their noisy protestations and loud laughter are asked to go away, "so that we may continue our discussion in peace" (ix, 2). In the *Apology* (II, iii, 2) Crescentius is severely recalled to the reserve which befits a philosopher; he forgets it by seeking to please the misguided multitude. Justin, who despises this hostile crowd, has no appetite to oppose it, nor the strength to dominate it; he continues his argumentation before his little circle of chosen hearers, men who are capable of following an argument and of being reached by an idea.

What gives these modest speeches their persuasive force is the assurance of a faith which is based upon God Himself and which is capable of facing death.

This apologetic demonstration is the whole work of Justin, at least all that we possess. It has in addition the advantage of making known to us, as the end to which it leads, the theological doctrine which the apologist professes, and towards which he leads his hearers. We shall not enter here into the details of this theology;<sup>37</sup> it will be sufficient for us to give its main outlines.

### *Theology*

The study of this theology is more difficult than that of the Apostolic Fathers or of Irenæus. The doctrinal teaching is presented, as we have said, as the goal to which the apologist leads his reader; he has not yet arrived there, he ascends towards it, and as much as possible by a path along which his interlocutor can follow him without difficulty. This aim leads him, not indeed to falsify the doctrine he sets forth, but to represent it in a light which will enlighten the neophyte without blinding him. The apologist makes use for this end of analogies, sometimes more apparent than real, which are suggested by the religious conceptions familiar to his reader; if he is trying to convert a Platonist, he will insist on the conception he entertains of the intelligible world and the divine world; if he is addressing a Stoic, he will dwell on the theory of the logos, and in particular of the seminal word, or again on the belief in the final conflagration of the world. Approaching the

<sup>37</sup> We have studied and discussed this in *Hist. du Dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 411-84.

Christian mystery by this familiar path, the interlocutor will feel more at home.

But this apologetic advantage is not without its disadvantages; by stressing apparent analogies, one runs the risk of imprudently effacing profound doctrinal divergences, or again of disconcerting the reader to whom there suddenly appears, in familiar terms, a quite new and unexpected dogma. This last impression will be obtained by anyone who studies in the second *Apology* the account which Justin gives of the theory of the seminal word as applied to Christ.<sup>38</sup>

On this point, moreover, the silence which Justin maintains in all the rest of his work is a sufficient indication that this conception of the seminal word has not for him the importance which he seems to attribute to it in his *Apology* addressed to the emperor-philosopher. This influence was not very dangerous for Justin, who had in fact little sympathy for Stoicism. But Platonism had once dominated his thought, and continued to attract him; this attraction constituted a danger; he will keep himself from it nevertheless, and will maintain on the essential points the independence of his religious thought.<sup>39</sup> Other apologists will be less prudent and less firm.

The anti-Jewish controversy will also have its dangers. Justin will be able to find arguments he can utilise in defending the Christian religion in the writings of Jews, in the rabbinical literature and above all in the apocalypses, but only too often these arguments defend Christianity only by misrepresenting it.

Of all these arms which apologists derive from their opponents the most effective, but also the most dangerous, is the theory of intermediaries. Between the supremely pure God and the matter which is unworthy of contact with Him, there must be an intermediate agent, without which creation cannot be understood. Similarly the revelation of the supreme God can reach man only by the influence of the intermediaries who propagate it. These conceptions, very widespread in Greek philosophy and in Judaism, provided the apologists with an argument, but at the same time constituted a danger for them.

To understand this, we can start with this rule of interpretation put forward by Tertullian when arguing against the Marcionites:

<sup>38</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 436.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 481.

"All that you require as being worthy of God you will find in the Father: He is invisible, beyond reach, tranquil, and so to speak, the God of philosophers. All that you single out as unworthy of God, will be attributed to the Son: He is seen, met with, He is the agent of the Father and His Minister, combining in Himself man and God: in His greatness He is God, in His infirmities, man; giving to man all that He takes from God; in a word, all that you regard as unworthy of God, is the mystery of the salvation of humanity" (*Marc.*, II, xxvii).

If we consider the supreme God, this exegetical rule might lead to striking out of the Bible all that is thought unworthy of his transcendence, that is to say, all his personal interventions; one will see in him, as Tertullian says, nothing more than "the God of philosophers." The theology of the Son of God is likewise in great danger: "all that one judges unworthy of the supreme God will be attributed to the Son"; this is a very dangerous rule; one may justify it, as Tertullian does here, by imputing these weaknesses not indeed to the divine nature of the Son, but to His humanity; at the same time there is more than one point in which this interpretation will not work.

### *The Word in Creation*

The first problem which arises is that of the creation. Christian theology taught clearly that God had made all things by His Word; the Greek philosophers were disposed to receive this teaching, but understanding the Word to be an intermediary between the supreme God and matter. The Jews also admitted this conception, which they applied either to Wisdom, or else to the Law.<sup>40</sup>

The apologists made the most of this present offered them by their opponents, but sometimes they allowed themselves to be drawn on to their ground. We read in Justin:

*Apol.*, II, i, 2. "His Son, the only one who is properly called Son, the Word, who before all creatures was with Him and had been generated when in the beginning the Father made and ordered all things by him. . . ."

*Dial.*, lxi, 1. "As a beginning, before all creatures, God generated from himself a Power which was the Word. . . . This can receive all

<sup>40</sup> Cf. *Hist. du Dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 456-8.



names because He carries out the plans of the Father and is born of the Father by will."

*Ibid.*, lxii, 4: "This Son, really sent forth before all creatures, was with the Father, and with Him the Father converses, as is shown by the sacred text of Solomon: this same being is the beginning before all creatures, and was generated by God as His Son, and it is He whom Solomon calls Wisdom."

These texts recall that of St. John:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was made nothing that was made."

But the Gospel text has a firm touch which is lacking in the apologist: in St. John the divine life, and the generation of the Word, is wholly independent not only of all the external operations of God, but also of all his plans: from the beginning, eternally, the Word was, and was with God, and was God; when God willed it, He created the world by His Word, but this external and contingent action had no influence on the inner life of God; this was eternally and necessarily what it was, in the simplicity of its essence, and in the Trinity of its persons.

In Justin, on the contrary, at least in the *Apology*, the generation of the Word is closely linked up with the creation of the world; this connection is not without danger: it runs the risk of drawing the eternal and necessary generation of the Word into the temporal and contingent sphere of creation.<sup>41</sup>

The inexact translation given to the classical text in *Proverbs*

<sup>41</sup> This danger of contamination is still more manifest in other apologists. Thus Tatian says: "By the will of his simplicity, there comes forth from Him the Word, and the Word, which does not go forth into the void, is the first work of the Father. It is he, as we know, who is the beginning of the world" (*Discourse*, v).

Athenagoras: "If, in your high wisdom, you wish to know who is the Son, I will tell you in a few words: He was the offspring of the Father, not that He was made, for God being an eternal intellect from the beginning, had with Him His Word, so that in all the material things, which were like a formless nature or a sterile earth . . . He was amongst them idea and energy, having come from without" (*Leg.* x).

St. Theophilus: "When God willed to make what He had decided, He generated this uttered Word, the first born of the whole creation, not depriving Himself of the Word, but generating the Word, and speaking constantly with His Word" (II, xxii). On all these passages, cf. *Hist. du Dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 453-5. On the theory of the twofold state of the Word, internal and uttered, see *ibid.*, pp. 449 *et seq.*

(viii, 22) led in the same direction: the apologists, like the Jews of their times, did not translate this text as: "The Lord has formed me at the beginning of His ways, before His works," but "The Lord has formed me as a beginning of His works." Thus one is tempted to regard the Word as the first of the works of God, and that was how the rabbis contemporary with Justin regarded the Law.<sup>42</sup> Justin will resist this temptation, safeguarded by his firm belief in the generation of the Word; his unfortunate and unfaithful disciple Tatian will be less vigilant, and while saying that the Word is "generated by the Father," he will also say that he is "the first work of the Father" (*Discourse*, v).

### *The Divine Appearances*

As in the case of the problem of creation, that of the relation between God and the world suggested to the apologists a solution both tempting and dangerous. The Old Testament contains many accounts of theophanies: God appearing to Abraham, Jacob and Moses. The explanation proposed is that it is not God the Father who appears thus, but the Son of God, and thus all these Scriptural texts are so many arguments which enable the apologist to distinguish in God two distinct persons. This is how the argument is presented in the *Dialogue*:

"The ineffable Father and Lord of the universe goes nowhere nor walks, nor sleeps, nor gets up, but remains in His own place wherever this may be; He is endowed with a penetrating sight and hearing, not by eyes or ears, but by an unspeakable power; He sees all, He knows all, and not one of us escapes Him; He does not move, and no place can contain Him, not even the whole world, for He was before the world was made. How, then, could this God speak to anyone, or show Himself to anyone, appear in a small corner of the earth, whereas on Sinai the people had not the strength even to see the glory of the one He sent, and Moses himself could not enter into the tent he had made because it was filled with the glory which came forth from God? . . . Thus neither Abraham nor Isaac nor Jacob nor any other amongst men saw the Father and the ineffable Lord of all things absolutely and of Christ Himself, but only Him who according to the will of God is God, His Son and Angel inasmuch as He is the Minister of His plans. It is He whom God willed to be born man of a virgin, He who became

<sup>42</sup> Cf. the treatise *Pesachim*, 54 a, Bar.: "Jahveh created me as the beginning of his ways, as the first of his works," and this is understood of the Law. Cf. *Hist. du Dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 457-8.

fire formerly to speak with Moses from the bush. For if we do not thus understand the Scriptures, it will follow that the Father and Lord of the universe was not then in heaven, whereas it was said through the mouth of Moses: 'The Lord rained on Sodom fire and brimstone from the Lord from the height of heaven' " (*Dial.*, cxxvii).<sup>43</sup>

From the apologetic point of view, this exegesis presented great advantages: the Platonist philosophers could follow it, for they themselves likewise held that the supreme God is invisible and inaccessible, and manifests Himself to men only by the ministry of secondary gods;<sup>44</sup> the Palestinian Jews, represented by Trypho,<sup>45</sup> thought that in the theophanies it was not God Himself who appeared, but an angel; to refute them it sufficed to prove to them that the personage seen by Abraham or Moses was divine.

While the apologist could feel pleased at this exegesis, the theologian had to suffer from it: not only was he led to represent God as dwelling above the world, and having there His place and His throne,<sup>46</sup> but above all it compromised the consubstantiality of the Father and the Son. At the time of which we speak, the Trinitarian controversies had not yet arisen, and there was less danger in these imprudences, but the Arian crisis would reveal them.<sup>47</sup> To remove them in a decisive manner, St. Augustine will reject the interpretation of the theophanies developed by the apologists: in these appearances it is not the Son alone who is showing Himself to men, but either the Father, or the Son, or the Spirit, or the whole Trinity.<sup>48</sup>

What we have just said will show how far we must recognise

<sup>43</sup> Cf. *Hist. du Dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, p. 426; we may consult other similar but less explicit passages in Justin: *Dial.*, lxi, 2; *Apol.*, I, lxi, 11.

<sup>44</sup> Maximus of Tyre, quoted *ibid.*, p. 665.

<sup>45</sup> It is fairly generally said that Justin is referring to Philo; this is an error (cf. *ibid.*, pp. 667 *et seq.*). The opponents represented by Trypho are the Palestinian Jews; their exegesis and their theology cannot be identified with those of Philo.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 427.

<sup>47</sup> The Arians, according to St. Phoebadius, will argue as follows: God the Father is invisible, immutable, perfect, eternal; the Son on the contrary is visible, since He was often seen by the patriarchs; He is subject to change, for He appeared under various forms; He is therefore not of the substance of the Father (*De Filii divinitate*, viii; Migne, P.L., XX, 45). Cf. Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, VIII, 27, 50; Migne, P.L., XXXIV, 392. Cf. *Saint Augustin théologien de la Trinité*, in *Miscellanea Agostiniana*, Vol. II, pp. 821-36.

<sup>48</sup> St. Irenæus, while reserving these appearances to the Son of God, avoids the danger by presenting these theophanies as preludes to the Incarnation. Cf. *Hist. du Dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 594-8.

Subordinationist tendencies in Justin, and what were their origin. We must recognise a deviation in his theology on two important points: the generation of the Word and His action in the world; His generation is put in too close a relation with the creation of the world, and thereby His necessity and His eternity are compromised;<sup>49</sup> in the manifestations He appears as the envoy or servant of the supreme God rather than the Son of God, equal and consubstantial with His Father.

This deviation is noteworthy, but it does not affect the theology of Justin as a whole, and what is still more important, it did not originate in an earlier tradition which led Christian thought in this direction; we find no trace of it in the Apostolic Fathers, Clement or Ignatius; we shall not find it either in Irenæus. In the apologists it is explained by the preoccupations of controversy: a foreign element has affected the doctrine of Justin, and has made it sometimes go astray.

In any case, we must not exaggerate this inexactitude: when we study carefully the weak points in the theology of the apologists, at least of the greatest amongst them, we realise that they did not give themselves up blindly to the Platonist or Jewish influences which attracted their attention; they resisted them. This resistance was of varying strength, certainly, in the different apologists, and also differed in perspicacity, but it manifested always the same Christian reaction against the same danger, Jewish or pagan.<sup>50</sup>

### *Personality of the Word*

Having pointed out, as we had to do, these weaknesses in the theology of Justin and the other apologists, we must emphasise the traditional data which Justin maintains firmly and defends with energy.

<sup>49</sup> We note sometimes a too close bond between the generation of the Word and the creation of the world (*Apol.*, II, vi, 2), but more often Justin affirms emphatically the absolute anteriority of the Word in relation to all creation: *Apol.*, II, vi, 3; *Dial.*, lxi, 1; lxii, 4; c, 2 and 4; cxxxix, 4.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. *Hist. du Dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, p. 459. These apparently opposed elements in the theology of the apologists have provided arguments for the historians who have attacked or defended their orthodoxy. This question has often given rise to keen discussion: in the seventeenth century, by Petavius and Huet; then by Jurieu and Bossuet in France; in England by Bull and S. Clarke; and towards the end of the last century by Duchesne and Newman. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 499-500.

The Word is really distinct from the Father. This is one of the fundamental theses of the *Dialogue*. Thus we read in chapter lvi, 11:

"I will endeavour to convince you that He who appeared to Abraham, Jacob and Moses and who is described as a God, is other than the God who made all things, I mean other in number, not in thought; for I affirm that He did nothing and said nothing else but what the Creator of the world, He above whom there is no other God, willed Him to do and to say."

Several other texts are invoked in the same sense, in particular, the account of creation. In saying, "Let us make man . . ." the Creator addressed Himself to "someone who was numerically distinct from Him, and who by nature was the Word." The same conclusion is deduced from this other text of *Genesis*: "Behold Adam is become as one of us"; "By saying 'as one of us' he indicates a number of beings together, and who are at least two" (lxii, 2 and 3).

Later on, in commenting on the theophanies, the apologist encounters the exegesis of certain Jewish doctors who saw in the divine Being appearing to the patriarchs a Power which radiated from God but which was inseparable from Him and was reabsorbed into Him. Justin categorically rejects this interpretation:

"It has been proved that this Power which the prophetic text calls God, and angel, is not only nominally distinct (from the Father), as light is distinct from the sun, but that it is something numerically distinct."<sup>51</sup>

The same thesis is defended again by the text of *Proverbs* (viii, 21-25):

"This text shows that He whom the Father thus generated was generated absolutely before all creatures; now that which is generated is numerically distinct from the one who generates, as all will agree" (*Apol.*, cxxix, 4).

### *Divinity of the Word*

That which is thus generated by the Father is "an intelligent being" (*Apol.*, lxii, 2), "an intelligent power" (lxi, 1); in other

<sup>51</sup> *Dial.*, cxxviii, 4. By a strange mistake Vacherot attributes to Justin the theory which he refutes (*Hist. de l'Ecole d'Alexandrie*, Vol. I, p. 230).

words, a person. And this person is divine. This essential dogma of Christianity is demonstrated in the *Apology*, but above all in the *Dialogue*. And what gives to these affirmations all their value is the religious faith which animates them. In the *Apology* Justin repeats to the pagans: "We must adore God only" (I, xvi, 6); "we adore only God" (xvii, 3). And yet he also says: "We adore and we love, after God, the Word born of the unbegotten and ineffable God" (II, xiii, 4). And in the *Dialogue*, he thus concludes a long process of reasoning:

"Thus then He is adorable, He is God, He is Christ; He who made all that we see gives testimony of this, and these texts say so clearly" (lxiii, 5).

And again, lower down:

"David has shown that, being Christ, He is a strong and adorable God" (lxxvi, 7).

We thus find ourselves in presence of two series of equally categorical affirmations, to which the martyr's death will give a force of irresistible conviction: We adore only God; we adore Christ. The great disciple of Justin, Irenæus, has shown the intimate union of these two theses; he quotes first of all from the work of Justin against Marcion this peremptory declaration:

"I would refuse my faith to the Lord Himself if He preached to us a God other than the Demiurge."

And then he adds:

"But because it is from the one God who made the world, who created us and who governs all, that the one Son has come to us . . . my belief in Him is assured, and my love towards the Father is unshakeable" (IV, i, 2).

We find here already the answer which the Fathers of the fourth century will develop against the Arians: our faith is given to the Son without disturbing our love for the Father, for the Son was generated by the Father; our homage and our adoration are not scattered over several gods, for the source of the Godhead is one.

*The Generation of the Son of God*

This dogma of the generation of the Son of God is brought out splendidly by Justin.<sup>52</sup> The apologist does so in contrasting the origin of the Word of God with that of creatures; the world has come from matter, the Word has come from God;<sup>53</sup> the other beings are works of God, ποιήματα, creatures, κτίσματα;<sup>54</sup> the Word is the bud of God, γέννημα, His child, τέκνον, His only Son, the only one who is really Son.<sup>55</sup>

The significance of these affirmations is confirmed by the numerous texts in which Justin endeavours to describe, or at least to hint at, the origin of the Word: it is like an emission,<sup>56</sup> a going out,<sup>57</sup> a springing forth;<sup>58</sup> it is a fire lit by another fire;<sup>59</sup> a Word which, without amputation or diminution, the Father generates from Himself:

"Is it not something like what takes place in ourselves? When we utter some word, we generate a word, and we utter it not by an amputation which diminishes the word which is in us. Again it is like a fire lit at another fire: the one at which it is lit is not diminished, but remains the same; and the one which is lit there is seen to be quite real, without diminishing that from which it was lit" (*Dial.*, lxi, 2).

It goes without saying that these are only far-off comparisons—such are the only ones which can be found to throw light on the mystery of God—but at least they turn the mind towards a correct conception of the dogma: the Son of God is not a creature, He is born of the Father. This decisive affirmation opposes beyond any question the theology of Justin and the other apologists to what will later be the Arian heresy. From this fruitful principle bequeathed by the apostolic tradition, the apologists did not know

<sup>52</sup> Loofs, who sees in this doctrine a deviation from the primitive faith, writes: "Certainly, as we see from Hermas and Barnabas, it was not the apologists who were first responsible for this deviation; at the same time, so far as we know, no Christian theologian before Justin laid as much stress as he did on the divine sonship" (*Paulus von Samosata*, p. 315).

<sup>53</sup> *Apol.*, I, x, 2; *Dial.*, lxi, 1.

<sup>54</sup> *Apol.*, II, vi, 3; *Dial.*, lxii, 4; lxxxix, 2; *Dial.*, lxi, 1; c, 2; cxxv, 3; cxxix, 4.

<sup>55</sup> *Apol.*, I, xxi, 1; *Dial.*, lxii, 4; cxxix, 4; cxxv, 3; cv, 1; *Apol.*, II, vi, 3. Cf. *Hist. du Dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, p. 444.

<sup>56</sup> *Dial.*, lxii, 4; lxiv, 1.

<sup>57</sup> *Dial.*, c, 4.

<sup>58</sup> *Dial.*, cxxviii, 3.

<sup>59</sup> *Dial.*, cxxviii, 4.

how to draw all the consequences it implied; the Church will find the principle in their works, and will know how to draw all these conclusions which flow from it, even those which had escaped these early apologists.

### *Martyrdom*

"No one believed Socrates so far as to die for what he taught, but for Christ's sake even working people and ignorant folk have despised fear and death" (*Apol.*, II, x, 3). The apologist was to confirm this proud word by his own death. Together with his companions, he was summoned to appear before the prefect of the city, Rusticus the philosopher and master of Marcus Aurelius.<sup>60</sup>

Justin tried to expound his faith; the prefect allowed him to say a few words:

"The true doctrine which we Christians follow piously, is belief in only one God, the Creator of all things visible and invisible, and in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, foretold by the prophets as the messenger of salvation for the human race and the master of good disciples. And I, who am but a man, cannot speak worthily of his infinite divinity; I confess (that this requires) a prophetic power; and the prophets have announced the coming of Him who is as I have said the Son of God. For I know that long ago the prophets foretold his coming amongst men."

We recognise in this brief exposition Justin's apologetic, the argument from prophecy on which he dwelt by preference. Rusticus did not reply: he pressed on the interrogation of Justin first and then of his companions. Lastly, turning once more to the apologist, he tried to shake him:

"Listen, thou who art said to be eloquent and who pretendest to know the true doctrine: if I have thee scourged and then beheaded, dost thou believe that thou shalt then ascend into heaven?" "I hope," replied Justin, "to receive the reward, if I suffer that which thou hast announced to me. For I know that those who have thus lived will keep the divine favour until the end of the world." "Thou fanciest, then," said Rusticus, "that thou wilt ascend to heaven to receive a reward?" "I do not fancy it, I know it, and I am fully persuaded of it." "Let us come back to realities. Come, all of you, and sacrifice together to the

<sup>60</sup> The Acts are in the *Corpus apologetarum* of Otto, III, 2, 262-75 (1879), and in Knopf, pp. 17-20.



gods." "No sensible man abandons piety to fall into impiety." "If you do not obey, you shall be tormented without mercy." "All our desire is to suffer for Jesus Christ our Lord and to be saved. This will be our salvation and our assurance at the fearful and universal judgment of our Master and Saviour." The other martyrs said likewise: "Do what thou wilt. We are Christians, and we do not sacrifice to idols." The prefect Rusticus pronounced the sentence: "Those who have refused to sacrifice to the gods and to obey the order of the emperor will be scourged and taken away to undergo the capital penalty in conformity with the laws.

"The holy martyrs, glorifying God, were led to the ordinary place of execution; their heads were cut off, and they consummated their martyrdom in the confession of the Lord."

### § 3. THE GREEK APOLOGISTS OF THE END OF THE SECOND CENTURY

#### *Tatian*<sup>1</sup>

St. Justin deserved an attentive study, the other apologists will not keep us so long. The first we meet with was a disciple of St. Justin; he spoke of his master only with veneration,<sup>2</sup> but he was little like him. Candid and boastful, he wrote at the beginning of his *Discourse*: "We have detached ourselves from your wisdom, and yet I was one of the most eminent of its representatives." Born in the land of the Assyrians (ch. xli) about the year 120, he went to Rome, and there doubtless he was converted, and became a disciple of Justin. As long as his master lived, he was faithful to the Church; "but after the martyrdom of Justin he fell away; he was exalted and puffed up by his title of master, thought himself superior to the others, and founded a new school." St. Irenæus, from whom we take this statement, adds: "He imagined invisible sons, like those we find in the fables of Valentine; like Marcion and Saturninus, he called marriage a corruption and a debauchery; and

<sup>1</sup> Cf. A. Puech, *Recherches sur le Discours aux Grecs de Tatien*, Paris, 1903; *id.*, *Les Apologues grecs*, ch. v, pp. 148-71. Edition of the *Discourse* by Schwartz, *Texte und Untersuchungen*, IV, 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Discourse*, xviii and xix. This fidelity to the memory of Justin does honour to Tatian; it also shows the prestige of the master, and all the more because of the very deep differences between the two men, and because the exaggerations of Tatian seem to have made him less likely to be influenced by a balanced mind like that of Justin.

finally, it was he who conceived the idea that Adam was not saved.”<sup>3</sup> This judgment of so eminent a man, who had personally known Justin and doubtless Tatian himself, confirms the impression the *Discourse* gives us: we do not yet find a heretic therein, but we are repelled by the presumptuous assurance of a writer who jeers at and despises his opponents, and who airily settles all the questions he deals with.

Three quarters of the work (ch. i-xxx) are devoted to polemics; the apologist violently attacks the pagan philosophers, pagan wisdom, and pagan religion. In his defence, it has been said that “he borrows from the Greeks the arms with which he combats the Greeks.”<sup>4</sup> That is true, but we must add that such arms could only wound;<sup>5</sup> it was not by such arguments that Tatian himself had been converted.<sup>6</sup> A few other apologists, especially Tertullian, imitated him; to excuse them it is recalled that they echoed what they heard proclaimed around them, and that they were glad to reply thus to the calumnies urged against the Christians. But it is to be noted that the most violent polemical writers were two who themselves abandoned the Church, Tatian and Tertullian, and one is glad to register that the best amongst the Christians remained foreign to such methods.<sup>7</sup>

Justin, when giving a reason for the resemblances between the pagan philosophy and Christian doctrine, explains them by preference by the action of the seminal Word, and sometimes also by the theory that the Greeks borrowed from the Jews. In Tatian the former explanation has disappeared save for a slight trace (ch.

<sup>3</sup> *Hær.*, I, xxviii, 1, quoted by Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.*, IV, xxix, 3. Eusebius, *ibid.*, 6-7, adds some information concerning Tatian, his *Diatesseron* and his *Discourse*.

<sup>4</sup> Puech, *Recherches*, p. 40.

<sup>5</sup> We may quote, as an example, this series of anecdotes on the philosophers: “Diogenes, who advertised his independence by the bragging of his tub, ate an octopus quite raw, and seized with colic, died from his intemperance. Aristippus, who paraded with his mantle of purple, gave himself up to debauchery with an air of gravity; the philosopher Plato was sold by Dionysius because of his gluttony, and Aristotle was guilty of the extreme folly of flattering Alexander, the wild young fool who, quite in accordance with the Aristotelian principles, put in a cage like a bear or a panther his friend who was not willing to adore him, and had him thus drawn after him. . . .”

<sup>6</sup> He narrates that he was converted by the reading of Holy Scripture (xxix).

<sup>7</sup> It must be put to Tatian’s credit that in his attacks on pagan religion, he dwells less than others on mythology, and deals above all with the superstitions, which were in fact most dangerous: astrology (ch. ix-xi), magic (xvii-xx), the Mysteries (xxix). Cf. Puech, *Recherches*, p. 43.

xiii); all the effort of the apologist is directed to establishing the priority of the prophets over the philosophers, and to infer therefrom that the Greeks are plagiarists (ch. xxxi *et seq.*). This argument was not original,<sup>8</sup> it will often be repeated and it will not enrich Christian apologetic.

### *Christian Doctrine*

Tatian's exposition of Christian doctrine would be more interesting to a historian than his polemics, but unfortunately his testimony in this matter is difficult to gather: the statement is often obscure,<sup>9</sup> and the thought generally confused. In the theology of the Word, Tatian retains some of the essential points in the Christian dogma, as Justin had set them forth; the Son is born of the very substance of the Father; this is signified by the illustration of the torches, lit one from the other; Justin had given this (*Dial.*, lxi); Tatian repeats it (v), and after him Tertullian, Lactantius,<sup>10</sup> the Nicene Fathers in their Creed. This image is clearly opposed to what the Arians will maintain when they make the Word a creature of God, formed from nothing, and not His Son, born of His substance. We must note again that, for Tatian as for all the apologists, it is not the Incarnation which makes the Word the Son of God, but the divine generation. At the same time it must be recognised that in Tatian the conception of this divine generation is less firm than in Justin;<sup>11</sup> it is moreover obscured by the dangerous distinction between the twofold state of the Word, first latent, and then uttered.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Puech, *Recherches*, pp. 82-9.

<sup>9</sup> This obscurity is not always due to Tatian; the most important text (ch. v) has been clearly altered. Already in the tenth century, Archbishop Arethas, to whom we owe the best manuscript of Tatian, added a marginal note in which he accused Tatian of Arianism; the scribe probably had the same impression, and attempted a correction. This text has been studied in *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, p. 450.

<sup>10</sup> Tertullian, *Apol.*, xxi; Lactantius, *Inst. div.*, IV, xxix.

<sup>11</sup> The Word is called "the first born work of God," a contradictory formula combining the idea of creation with that of generation.

<sup>12</sup> "The master of all things, who is himself the substantial support of the universe was alone in this sense that creation had not yet taken place; but in the sense that all the power of things visible and invisible was in him, He included all things in Himself by means of His Word. By the will of his simplicity, the Word came forth from Him, and the Word, who went not out into the void, is the first-born work of the Father. He, as we know, is the beginning of the world. He comes from a distribution, not from a division. . . ." (v).

On the subject of the human soul, Tatian confusing eternity and immortality, considered that the soul is by nature mortal, but that if it has known God, after it has been dissolved for a time it will live again, to die no more.<sup>13</sup> Elsewhere he rather imprudently makes use of Platonist conceptions<sup>14</sup> or Gnostic ones.<sup>15</sup>

All these contaminations show the weakness of a mind which thought itself strong because it was severe, and which allowed itself to be affected by the most unsound elements of the philosophies it despised.

### *The Defection of Tatian*

This *Discourse* was doubtless written very shortly before the defection of Tatian.<sup>16</sup> It was in the twelfth year of Marcus Aurelius, 172-3,<sup>17</sup> that Tatian abandoned the Church. He had, it seems, already left Rome for the East; he lived for a few years more at Antioch, in Cilicia, in Pisidia. The small sect of Encratites which he had founded lasted a long time, but did not spread much; most of his works, which seem to have been fairly numerous, disappeared

<sup>13</sup> "The human soul, in itself, is not immortal, O Greeks, it is mortal; but this same soul is capable also of not dying. . . . It does not die, even if it be dissolved for a time, if it has acquired a knowledge of God." We find in Justin (*Dial.*, v) the germ of this confusion: the Platonists commonly held that there was between the human soul and God an affinity of nature; this for them implied immortality. Justin rejects all that, recognising in the soul only an immortality accorded by a grace from God. Tatian goes further, making all souls die, but granting to the souls of the just a kind of resurrection. On these confusions, fairly frequent at this time, cf. Bainvel, art. *Ame aux trois premiers siècles*, in *Dict. de théol. cath.*

<sup>14</sup> "The wing of the soul is the perfect spirit, which she loses by sin; after which she keeps close to the ground like a young chicken, and having fallen from her conversation with heaven, she desires to participate in lower things" (xx).

<sup>15</sup> This above all in his theory of the spirit. Tatian distinguishes between two spirits: an inferior spirit which animates and differentiates the stars, angels, men and animals; and a superior and divine spirit, which he identifies with Light and the Word; if the soul unites itself to this spirit, it forms with it a syzygy or couple, according to the will of God: ch. xiii and xv. Cf. Puech, *Recherches*, pp. 65 and 68.

<sup>16</sup> Harnack, *Literatur*, II, i, 284 *et seq.*, dates the *Discourse* in Justin's lifetime. It would then be a manifesto of the newly converted Tatian; R. C. Kukula, *Tatiens sogenannte Apologie*, Leipzig, 1900, maintains on the contrary that the *Discourse* is an opening lecture in the heretical school founded by Tatian, delivered in Asia Minor about 172 (p. 52). These two extreme theses have found no echo: what Tatian says about Justin is better understood if Justin was already dead; on the other hand, the heresy is not yet declared but it is threatened.

<sup>17</sup> This date is given us by Eusebius in his *Chronicle*, an. 2188.

quickly.<sup>18</sup> Apart from the *Discourse*, only one had a great and wide diffusion: the *Diatessaron*. This is a harmony of the four Gospels, the first, apparently, to be composed. It was long in use in the Syrian Church; it is known to us to-day through Arabic and Armenian translations, and also by Latin and Flemish Gospel harmonies.<sup>19</sup>

### *Athenagoras*

Four or five years after the *Discourse* of Tatian, there appeared the *Apology* of Athenagoras.<sup>20</sup> The author is quite unknown;<sup>21</sup> but

<sup>18</sup> *Hist. Eccles.*, IV, xxix 7: "He left a great number of works." Eusebius speaks of them, apparently, only from hearsay. Clement of Alexandria (*Strom.*, III, 12) mentions a book by Tatian on *Perfection according to Christ*; Rendel Harris thinks he has rediscovered this in an Armenian translation.

<sup>19</sup> Theodoret, *Hær. fab. comp.*, I, 20 (Migne, P.G., LXXIII, 372) writes: "Tatian also composed the Gospel called *Diatessaron*, suppressing the genealogies and everything which shows the Lord to have been born of David according to the flesh. And this book is in use not only by those of his sect, but also by those who follow the doctrine of the apostles, and who do not perceive the malice of this composition, and who find it more convenient to make use of this summary. I myself found more than two hundred copies of this book in honour in our churches; I collected them all and put them aside, and substituted for them the four gospels of the evangelists." Theodoret was Bishop of Cyr on the borders of the Syrian world; this explains the diffusion of the work in his diocese. For a long time, in fact, the work was in great honour in the Syrian Church. Aphraates quotes it, and Ephrem comments on it; at the beginning of the fifth century its use was forbidden. Cf. Zahn, *Forschungen. Geschx. des N. T. Kanons*, Vol. I, Erlangen, 1881, pp. 1-328; Vol. II, 1883, pp. 286-99; *Gesch. d. N. T. Kanons*, II, 2 (1892), pp. 530-56. Latin translation of the Armenian version: G. Moesinger, *Evangelii concordantis expositio in Latinum translata*, Venice, 1876; Arabic: A. S. Marmardji, O.P., *Diatessaron de Tatien*, Beyrouth, 1935.

The Latin text of Victor of Capua is not so much a translation as a revision of the *Diatessaron* (Migne, P.L., LXVIII, 255-358). A Flemish translation has been found and studied by D. Plooij, *A Primitive Text of the Diatessaron*, Leyden, 1923. This publication has led to a great number of articles and studies. Cf. *Recherches*, 1924, pp. 370-1; *Revue Biblique*, 1924, pp. 624-8.

<sup>20</sup> The *Apology* is dedicated to the emperors Marcus Aurelius Antoninus and Lucius Aurelius Commodus. Commodus was associated in the government of the empire on November 27th, 176; Marcus Aurelius died on March 17th, 180; the book was thus written between these two dates. The description of a profound peace in chapter 1 must refer to the time before the war of the Marcomans, which broke out in 178; there is no trace either of the Lyons persecution; note especially what is said about slaves (xxxv): "none of them has been denounced"; the apologist would not have spoken thus after 177. All this takes us back, then, to the end of 176 or the beginning of 177.

<sup>21</sup> The only references we find to Athenagoras in Antiquity are, in Methodius, one explicit citation (*De Resurrect.*, xxxii, quoting *Apol.*, xxix), and two allusions; in addition, a fragment attributed to the lost history of Philip of Sidon

the two books of his which we possess, the *Apology* and the *Treatise on the Resurrection*, are well worth reading; it is a joy for one who has just read the invectives of Tatian to find himself here once more in contact with a truly Christian soul, tranquil and pure.

From the first words, the *Apology* displays a reserve and courtesy in expression. The whole Empire enjoys a profound peace; Christians alone are persecuted: what is the reason? If we are convicted of a crime, we accept the punishment; but if we are persecuted only for a name, we appeal to your justice. Three accusations are discussed: Christians are reproached for being atheists, for eating human flesh, and practising incest; these two last calumnies are refuted briefly; the accusation of atheism is discussed at length (ch. iv-xxx); Athenagoras sets forth Christian dogma and the Christian life in a valuable section from which we can quote here only a few fragments.<sup>22</sup> After expounding the essential features of Christian theology, the apologist continues:

"Allow me to raise my voice and to speak frankly, as before philosopher-kings: is there one among those who resolve syllogisms, who dissipate amphibologies . . . who has a soul sufficiently pure to love his enemies instead of hating them, to bless those who curse him instead of replying to them at least by insulting words, to pray for those who aim at taking his life? . . . But amongst ourselves you will find poor people, working men, old women, who are doubtless incapable of proving by argument the value of our doctrine, but who prove it by their actions; they do not recite harangues, but they show good actions; when they are struck they do not return the blows; when they are robbed they do not take proceedings; they give to those who ask from them; they love their neighbour as themselves" (*Apol.*, xi).

Here we have the theme, so dear to all the apologists, of the superiority of life over discourse; *Non eloquimur magna, sed vivimus*, as Minucius Felix will shortly say. It is also the argument which Origen will take up powerfully against Celsus: Christianity alone has been able to transform and raise to the highest virtue these working people, these poor folk, whom philosophy had never

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(Migne, P.G., VI, 182); this fragment is full of obvious errors: the author says that Athenagoras addressed his apology to Hadrian and Antoninus; he adds that "his disciple was Clement, the author of the *Stromateis*, and Pantænus the disciple of Clement." Nothing can be made of this.

<sup>22</sup> Longer citations and some comments will be found in *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 494-505.

reached. And the source of all this is the Christian faith, and the goal it sets before us:

"Will those who take as their motto in life, 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die' . . . be regarded as pious folk? And are we to be regarded as impious, we who know that the present life is short, and worth little, who are animated by the sole desire to know the true God and His Word, (to know) what is the unity of the Son with the Father, what is the communion of the Father with the Son, what is the Spirit, what is the union and distinction of these terms united to each other, the Spirit, the Son, the Father, we who know that the life we await is greater than we can say, provided always we leave the world pure of every stain, we who love mankind so much as to love not only our friends . . . ? Once more, will it be believed that we are impious, we who are such, and who lead such a life to escape the judgment?" (*Apol.*, xii).

Written at this date, on the eve of the massacres at Lyons, this page is very moving; it reveals the profound source of Christian life; nothing can dry it up or repress it. It also shows what dogma is for the Christian, and in particular, the dogma of the Trinity, which the pagan readers of Athenagoras regarded merely as a speculation like their own; the apologist shows them that it is the term towards which tends the whole life of faith; there is no more expressive commentary on the words of Jesus: "This is eternal life, to know Thee, the only true God, and Him whom Thou hast sent."

Of Athenagoras we possess, besides the *Apology*, a *Treatise on the Resurrection of the Body*. The doctrine defended therein is one of those which the pagans found greatest difficulty in accepting; we see this already in the discourse of St. Paul at Athens (*Acts* xvii, 32); it is also one of those which were most dear to Christians. At this time of persecutions, when the body was constantly menaced with the worst torments and with death, the belief in the glorious resurrection was a great consolation. Also, the pagans took all possible steps to remove the remains of the martyrs, not only to prevent the survivors from getting relics, but also in the vain hope of making the resurrection impossible.<sup>23</sup> It is easy to understand the importance of this doctrine for the apologists: Justin had defended it in a treatise of which we possess only some fragments;<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> E.g., at Lyons, *Hist. Eccles.*, V, i, 63.

<sup>24</sup> The attribution of this treatise to Justin is not certain, but it is likely. Cf. *supra*, p. 546, n. 16.

and we have a treatise by Athenagoras on the same subject. This little book has the same character as the *Apology*; it is a gentle and lucid discussion; addressed to philosophers, it keeps altogether on their ground; it is thereby deprived of some decisive arguments, namely, those which are based on the positive dispositions of God, the Incarnation and Resurrection of Christ. Here as in the *Apology*, the method to which Athenagoras confines himself made this sacrifice necessary: these two works are impoverished in consequence.

### St. Theophilus

Five or six years after the *Apology* of Athenagoras there appeared the three books *To Autolycus*.<sup>25</sup> The author, Theophilus, is known as "the sixth bishop of Antioch after the Apostles" (*Hist. Eccles.*, IV, xx); he stands out in the group of apologists because of his pastoral charge, for he was a bishop. He did not address his work to the emperors, nor to pagan opinion in general, but, like the writer of the *Letter to Diognetus*, to a pagan he wished to convert, Autolycus; a real or fictitious personage, we do not know which.

From the beginning (I, ii) he stresses the necessity of a moral preparation:

"If thou sayest to me, 'Show me thy God,' I answer: 'Show me what sort of man thou art, and I will show thee what sort is my God. Show me if the eyes of thy soul see clearly, and if the ears of thy heart know how to listen. . . . God is seen by those who are capable of seeing him, when they have the eyes of their soul open. All men, indeed, have eyes, but some have eyes that are troubled and blind, insensible to the light of the sun; but from the fact that there are blind people it does not follow that the light of the sun is not shining. Let the blind acknowledge the facts, and let them open their eyes. Similarly, O man, thou hast eyes which are troubled by thy faults and thy bad actions. One must have a soul which is pure like a well-polished mirror. If there is rust on the mirror, it will not reproduce the image of a man; in the same way, when sin is in a man, the sinner is not capable of seeing God."

We recognise here one of the theses familiar to the apologists as also to the martyrs. In 177, the aged bishop of Lyons, St. Pothinus was asked by the proconsul: "What is thy God?" "Thou shalt

<sup>25</sup> The death of Marcus Aurelius is mentioned (III, xxvii, xxviii); these three books seem to belong to the first years of Commodus (182-3).



learn this," he replied, "if thou art worthy of it" (*Hist. Eccles.*, V, i, 31). Again under Commodus, the martyr Apollonius said to the prefect Perennius: "The word of the Lord, O Perennius, is perceived only by the heart which sees, just as light by the eyes which see, and it is in vain that a man speaks to fools, or that light shines for the blind" (*Acts*, ed. Knopf, n. 32).

After a long and involved reasoning, in which there is question not only of God but of the resurrection of the body (viii, xiii), and of the evil doings of the gods of Olympus (ix, x), Theophilus ends his first book by saying that he himself once did not believe, and that he was converted by the reading of the prophets. He exhorts his friend to read them in his turn. The second book is for the most part devoted to the exposition of the teaching of the prophets; in the third, the apologist demonstrates the priority of Holy Scripture over pagan literature.

Theophilus has no sympathy for Hellenism; he condemns it wholly and in all its representatives: Homer, Hesiod, Orpheus, Aratus, Euripides, Sophocles, Menander, Aristophanes, Herodotus, Thucydides, Pythagoras, Diogenes, Epicurus, Empedocles, Socrates and Plato. The death of Socrates, which Justin loved to recall as that of a just man persecuted by the wicked, is judged severely: "Why did he decide to die? What recompense did he hope to receive after death?" (III, ii). In this summary condemnation we recognise the moral preoccupation which is so strong in Theophilus; we recognise its sincerity, but regret its narrowness.<sup>26</sup>

Very much on guard against Hellenism, the bishop of Antioch was in contact with Judaism, and sometimes was subject to the influence of its traditions or its legends.<sup>27</sup> Above all he had for the

<sup>26</sup> The chronology is very weak, but is presented with great assurance: from the Creation down to the day on which he is writing, 5,698 years have elapsed, plus a few months and days; Theophilus is proud of this reckoning: what historian has gone back so far? (III, xxvi). This demonstration might appeal to minds to whom all Antiquity appeared venerable, and Theophilus himself takes it very seriously. Still less importance will be attached to the etymologies in which he delights: the cry Evan (Evœ) is inspired by Satan, who deceived Eve (II, xxviii); Noe was called Deucalion because he said to men: Come, God calls you (*δεύτε, καλεῖ δμᾶς ὁ θεός*) (III, xix), etc. We find similar fantasies in the *Cratylus*, but Plato did it for amusement, whereas Theophilus regarded them as proofs.

<sup>27</sup> Whereas he rejects all Greek philosophy, he regards the Sibyls as prophets (II, ix *et seq.*). He is probably following some *haggada* when he writes that shed blood coagulates and cannot penetrate the earth, because the earth has a horror for it since the murder of Cain (II, xxix). Similarly, when he affirms that the priests who resided in the Temple cured leprosy and every illness (II, xxi).

Old Testament a profound veneration; he wrote against Marcion a treatise which has not come down to us;<sup>28</sup> he thus opened the way to those courageous Eastern bishops who down to the fifth century had to defend their churches against the Marcionite propaganda.

#### § 4. MINICIUS FELIX<sup>1</sup>

##### *The Octavius*

Minucius Felix is doubtless the last in date of the apologists known to us,<sup>2</sup> but he is one of the first in charm of style: Theophilus took us to the Eastern world, to the frontiers of the Hellenic and Syrian churches; the reading of the *Octavius* brings us back to the West, and for the first time, puts us in presence of a Latin text.<sup>3</sup>

This little treatise is written in a very attractive style, and all the humanists admired it. "When we read," says Boissier,<sup>4</sup> "this charming work, which goes back to the *Phaedrus* by way of the Tusculans, and seems illumined by a ray of light from Greece,

<sup>28</sup> This work is mentioned by Eusebius (*Hist. Eccles.*, IV, xxiv), as well as a work against the heresy of Hermogenes. Loofs (*Theophilus v. Antiochien adv. Marcionem*, Leipzig, 1930) thinks he has found the substance of the treatise against Marcion in the work of Irenæus, *Adversus Hæreses*, and he has devoted a mass of learning and ingenuity in order to prove this thesis. But it cannot be upheld. Cf. *Recherches de Sc. Relig.*, 1931, pp. 596-601. On the theology of Theophilus, cf. *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 508-13.

<sup>1</sup> The *Octavius*, conserved in a manuscript of the ninth century (Parisius, 1661) was edited in the Vienna *Corpus* by Halm in 1867, also with a French translation and commentary, by Waltzing (Louvain, 1903). English translation by Freese, published by S.P.C.K. Cf. Boissier, *La fin du paganisme*, Vol. I, pp. 261-89; Monceaux, *Histoire littéraire de l'Afrique chrétienne*, Vol. I, pp. 463-508; P. de Labriolle, *Histoire de la littérature latine chrétienne*, Vol. II, pp. 147-75.

<sup>2</sup> This date is much discussed; between the *Octavius* and Tertullian's *Apologeticus*, which dates from 197, we find striking resemblances; to explain them, the hypothesis of a common source has been given up, and there remain two rival theses: Tertullian is prior (Boissier, Monceaux, De Labriolle); Minucius is prior (Schanz, Ehrhard, Waltzing, Moricca). Fifteen years ago, Dom de Bruyne wrote (*Revue bénédictine*, October, 1924, p. 136): "This question bids fair to take its place amongst the tedious and insoluble problems raised periodically by some courageous seekers." We shall study the *Octavius* briefly without referring again to this discussion.

<sup>3</sup> Pope Victor is said to be the first Christian writer in Latin, but what he wrote has not come down to us. The *Acts* of the Scillitan martyrs begin Latin Christian literature for us; the first work in Latin is Tertullian's *Apologeticus* or else the *Octavius*, according to the side taken in the debate on the relative priority of these two works.

<sup>4</sup> G. Boissier, *op. cit.*, p. 289.

we see well that the writer imagined a kind of smiling and sympathetic Christianity which ought to penetrate into Rome without making a noise, and renew it without shock." The Church historian, whose curiosity is more exigent, will find something to regret in this charming work, which is after all only a distant introduction to the faith.

Octavius Januarius, the friend of Minucius, meets him in Rome in September; after long conversations, they profit by the fact that the law courts are closed for the holidays and go to Ostia, taking with them a pagan friend, Cæcilius. Perceiving a statue of Serapis, Cæcilius salutes it according to the custom by throwing a kiss to it. Octavius turns to Minucius and says: "Really it is not good, my dear friend, to give up to the vagaries of common ignorance a man who loves you and never leaves you, and to let him address homage one fine day to stones, especially when you know that you are equally responsible with him for his shameful error." Cæcilius is saddened by this incident, and as soon as they arrive at the end of the mole they sit down and the discussion begins.

Cæcilius, who defends paganism, is a philosopher of the Academy; in human things, everything is doubtful and uncertain; we meet with probabilities rather than with truths; hence it is a strange presumption for the ignorant to pretend to know God; we are wiser, we who, in the midst of such uncertainty, believe our ancestors and respect our Roman traditions. Those who reject them are intolerable, and Christians more than all others. And here Cæcilius, in his indignation and contempt, echoes all the calumnies uttered against all Christians.<sup>5</sup>

### *The Apologetics of Minucius Felix*

Octavius answers him by stressing in the first place the contradiction between this sceptical philosophy and this intolerant paganism. There is only one God: the spectacle of the world convinces us of this, and popular belief tends to it spontaneously;<sup>6</sup> the poets and philosophers proclaim it; it is the belief of Christians. By contrast, how silly are the pagan fables, and how shameful are the pagan mysteries! Your calumnies against Christianity can bring

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 531.

<sup>6</sup> We find here (xviii) the arguments developed by Tertullian in his little book on the *Testimony of the Soul*.

a blush only to those who invent them: amongst us everything is simple and pure:

"Is it necessary to raise statues to God, if man is His image? Why should one build temples to Him, seeing that the universe which He formed with His hands is not able to contain Him? How can one enclose this immensity in a small chapel? It is our souls which must serve as a dwelling place for Him, and He wants us to consecrate our hearts to Him. Of what use is it to offer victims to Him, and would it not be an ingratitude, when He has given us all that is born on earth for our use, to give back to Him the presents He has given us? Let us realise that He requires of us only a pure heart and an upright conscience. To conserve one's innocence is to pray to God, to respect justice is to honour Him. We win His favour by abstaining from all fraud, and when one saves a man from danger, one offers Him the sacrifice He prefers. Those are the victims, and that is the worship we offer to Him. Amongst us, he is the most religious who is the most just."<sup>7</sup>

This brilliant page reveals the attractiveness but also the inadequacy of this *Apology*: if Christianity were only that, it would be only a philosophy. Octavius moreover is aware of this, for he promises to return elsewhere to the discussion which he begins here (ch. xxxvi). The only argument he pursues to the end is the spectacle of Christian virtues, especially in martyrdom:

"What a fine spectacle for God is that of a Christian who fights against pain, who vindicates his liberty in face of kings and princes, yielding only to God to whom he belongs, who surmounts, triumphant and victorious, the magistrate who condemns him. . . . This is because the soldier of God is not abandoned in pain, not destroyed by death. A Christian may seem to be unhappy, but he is not. . . . Do you not realise that no one would wish without reason to expose himself to such torments, and could not support them without God? . . . Peaceful, modest, certain of the goodness of our God, we uphold the hope of future happiness by faith in His ever present majesty. Thus we rise again to a happy life, and already here below we live in the contemplation of the future. (We despise the disdain of the philosophers) whom we know to be corrupters, adulterers, tyrants, of an inexhaustible loquaciousness against what are their own vices. But we, who make a show of wisdom not by our mantle but by our soul, the greatness of

<sup>7</sup> Ch. xxxii, 3.

which is not in speech but in our life, we glory because we have grasped what these men have striven to find with such great efforts and have never succeeded. . . . We wish superstition to be driven back, impiety to be expiated, and the true religion to be respected" (ch. xxxvii-xxxviii).

This discourse made a deep impression on the two friends. Finally Cæcilius broke the silence and declared himself converted; he only asked for a further instruction, which was promised him for the next day.

This brilliant *Apology* is then only an introduction to the faith, and this explains its silences: Minucius wished to reach the educated public, and arouse a sympathetic curiosity in favour of Christianity. At the same time we may wonder whether a less reserved exposition would not have been more effective, and thereby wiser. We may well think so; but having said that, we must allow that the *Octavius* has a great charm and a great strength. We do not find in it the vigour or originality of Tertullian; the borrowed elements are numerous, but they are utilised with a very sure and very personal touch; the introduction itself is not a mere addition, but it aims at showing the readers that Christians can be, like them, cultivated people and of good standing, lawyers who profit by the court vacations in order to discuss amongst themselves the most elevated problems. The discussion confirms the impression of the beginning: in Cæcilius's exposition, so vigorous and sometimes so brutal, the pagans would recognise their own objections, in the very form they gave to them or would wish to give them; the defence of Octavius would appeal to them, there is not one objection made against the Christians which is not turned back against the paganism they knew so well and which they excused by habit or by tradition, but which a moment of reflection would lead them to despise. Philosophy would give way in its turn; some of its most elevated theses confirm the Christian doctrines or at least dispose the mind in favour of them; on the other hand, it will acknowledge its inability to uphold life, and this will be done by those who give the most brilliant exposition of it. In face of it, we have Christianity, which it despises, but the moral beauty of which is so simple, so sincere, and so widespread, and which surpasses it in every way. With this description the *Octavius* finishes; it can be understood that its attraction was very great indeed.

*Christian Apologetics in the Second Century*

If we consider it as a whole, the apologetics of the second century makes known to us in the first place the opposition which Christianity encountered, and which the apologists endeavoured to lessen. At first it was the pagan cults the Apostles found opposing them, as was the case with St. Paul at Athens; their aim was then to combat polytheism and idolatry, and to establish the belief in one only God, in order to pass on to the mission of Christ. Very soon other opponents came on the scene and occupied the first place; these were the philosophers, who gave to Hellenism its consistence; the pagan cults and their mysteries sufficed to deceive and to lull religious needs, but they could not justify themselves before the intellect unless they were transformed and spiritualised by philosophy; the philosophers moreover were not content merely to defend paganism, they attacked the new religion. More and more the combat was taken up by two teams of thinkers, those of the Church, and those of Philosophy.

The issue of this combat could not be doubted; from the time we are considering, it was plain: Hellenism could maintain its empire over men's souls only by deliberate combinations and compromises: philosophy of itself resulted only in a barren speculation and one which was generally uncertain; it had to rest on the pagan cults in order to obtain the force or at least the illusion of a religious energy, but in order to derive from these cults some semblance of life, it had to purify them, elevate them, and transform them; in spite of all these endeavours, it could not give them an objective truth which their whole contents excluded.

Christianity, on the contrary, was everything combined: a belief, a cult, and a moral code; all was in one system, with the same solidity throughout: all that philosophy had anticipated was consecrated by a divine revelation, and this natural theology was continued in mysteries which illumined the present life and prepared for the one to come. All this gave to the apologists a tone of certitude which was calm, sincere and deep, a tone philosophy could not imitate, and which was irresistible; to this must be added the spectacle of the fruits which this religion produced, in its martyrs first of all, and also in the whole mass of its followers, even the most humble; here above all Christianity displayed an evident and decisive superiority over Hellenism.

Such was truly the essence of the debate, and on these questions the affirmations of the apologists of the second century had a lasting value. Besides that, many secondary questions, raised in the course of the discussion, received solutions which were not always the best: Christianity, necessary to mankind, appeared very late; why was this? To this puzzling question the *Letter to Diognetus* replied by affirming the providential plan which will draw salvation from general misery; St. Justin showed the action of the seminal Word which reveals at least some of the indispensable religious truths; Tertullian spoke of the naturally Christian soul; Justin, Tatian and others added that the philosophers have copied from the Bible. Is Christianity a unique revelation, or was it prepared for by a revelation given to all men, or at least to the Jews? This question is closely linked with the preceding one; it was answered only incompletely. The Jewish revelation was imperfectly understood; prophecy was well brought out into the light, but we do not yet find in the apologists the idea of the progressive education of mankind which St. Irenæus will set forth in a masterly way. Whence comes the transcendence of Christian doctrine? Justin saw plainly and said with truth that its source is the divine revelation. There is more incertitude in the exposition of this revealed teaching; the apparent similarities between this theology and the Platonist or Stoic philosophy sometimes hide from the apologists the fundamental opposition between these two systems; hence the dangerous inexactitudes we have pointed out. We must note, moreover, that the apologists undertook their task of their own initiative; the Church was pleased with their zeal, but it did not wish to cover with its authority their sometimes too tolerant philosophy. Very soon, moreover, towards the end of this second century, the struggle against the heretics will force the Church to give to the rule of faith more rigour, to the liturgy more unity, and to the ecclesiastical government a more effective power.

# APPENDIX

## CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF POPES AND EMPERORS

<i>Emperors</i>			<i>Popes</i>		
Augustus ...	died in	14			
Tiberius ...	...	14- 37			
Caligula ...	...	37- 41			
Claudius ...	...	41- 54			
Nero ...	...	54- 68	St. Peter ...	...	30?-64
Galba, Otho, Vitellius		68- 69	St. Linus ...	...	64?-76? <sup>1</sup>
Vespasian ...	...	69- 79	St. Anacletus ...	...	76?-88? <sup>1</sup>
Titus ...	...	79- 81	St. Clement ...	...	88?-about 100
Domitian ...	...	81- 96	St. Evaristus ...	...	?-?
Nerva ...	...	96- 98	St. Alexander ...	...	?-?
Trajan ...	...	98-117	St. Sixtus ...	...	?-?
			St. Telesphorus ...	...	?- about 136
Hadrian ...	...	117-138	St. Hyginus ...	...	about 136- about 140
Antoninus the Pious ...	...	138-161	St. Pius ...	...	about 140- before 154
			St. Anicetus ...	...	from 154-?
			St. Soter ...	...	before 175-175
Marcus Aurelius ...	...	161-180	St. Eleutherus ...	...	175-189
Commodus ...	...	180-192			

<sup>1</sup> The dates of Linus and Anacletus are unknown. We might attribute to each the twelve years given to them in the tradition enshrined in the *Liber Pontificalis*. Cf. above p. 479.



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THE HISTORY  
OF THE  
PRIMITIVE  
CHURCH



LEBRETON  
&  
ZEILLER

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VOLUME II



MACMILLAN

THE HISTORY OF THE  
PRIMITIVE CHURCH



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# THE HISTORY OF THE PRIMITIVE † CHURCH †

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BOOK III

*The Church in the  
Third Century  
Part I*

NIHIL OBSTAT:

REGINALDUS PHILLIPS, S.T.L.  
*Censor deputatus*

IMPRIMATUR

✠ E. MORROGH BERNARD  
*Vic. Gen.*

WESTMONASTERII  
*die 23 Novembris, 1945*



## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

*The third book of the History of the Primitive Church deals with the first half of the third century. The principles governing citations from the Scriptures and ecclesiastical writers are the same as for the first two books. Some notes within brackets are added on my own responsibility.*

*After much thought, it has been decided to adopt a continuous pagination and numbering of the chapters for the four books of this work. A similar system is adopted in the half-volumes of the Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique. I have copied this idea, in order to facilitate the use of the comprehensive index to the whole work, which will appear at the end of the fourth book, and also to simplify the many cross-references which occur throughout the text.*

*I am happy to be able to announce that the reception accorded this English translation of the first books of the monumental Histoire de l'Eglise of Fliche and Martin make it possible to continue with further volumes of this great work. These will appear in due course, but the title History of the Primitive Church will be replaced by more suitable ones.*

ERNEST C. MESSENGER

## THE GNOSTIC CRISIS AND MONTANISM

§ I. THE GNOSTIC CRISIS<sup>1</sup>*The Origins of Gnosticism*

We have already, in our study of the apostolic period, met with Gnosticism, a religious movement which was, as we have seen, anterior to Christianity.<sup>2</sup> Amongst the Eastern races which were formed by the conquest of Alexander into the great Seleucid and Ptolemaic kingdoms and which were thoroughly subjugated two or three centuries later by the Roman invasion, there arose various cults and superstitions which spread throughout the Mediterranean peoples. By way of the near East, the Hellenic world came into contact with Persia, and experienced the attraction of its dualistic theology and its heavenly hierarchies. Already before the Christian era these foreign speculations were fermenting at Alexandria, in Syria, and in all the Hellenic East, and working on the various religions, especially the strongest. They threatened to invade Judaism, and as soon as Christianity appeared they endeavoured to prey upon this also; hence the fight between Simon Magus and St. Peter, and of Bar Jesus against St. Paul. We have traced in the letters of the apostle the ever-growing danger of this contagion. It attacked Christian doctrine, denying the reality of the incarnation of Christ and also the resurrection of the body, out of contempt for the flesh; it also attacked Christian morality, regarding marriage as a corruption, or on the other hand it tolerated, with a proud disdain, all the licentious aberrations of the flesh. After the

<sup>1</sup> Bibliography.—E. de Faye, *Introduction à l'étude du gnosticisme*, Paris, 1903; *Gnostiques et gnosticisme: Étude critique des documents du Gnosticisme chrétien aux II<sup>e</sup> et III<sup>e</sup> siècles*, 2nd edn., Paris, 1925; W. Bousset, *Hauptprobleme der Gnosis*, Göttingen, 1907; J. P. Steffes, *Das Wesen des Gnostizismus und sein Verhältnis zum katholischen Dogma*, Paderborn, 1922. The chief texts are usefully brought together in W. Woelker, *Quellen zur Geschichte der christlichen Gnosis*, Tübingen, 1932.

[Add to above: article on Gnosticism in *Catholic Encyclopedia*, by J. P. Arendzen; essay on Gnosticism, etc., by Lebreton in *Studies in Comparative Religion* (C.T.S.), Vol. II.—Tr.]

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *History of the Primitive Church*, by Lebreton-Zeiller, Bk. II, pp. 355-359.

epistles of St. John, this virulent poison was denounced in the letters of St. Ignatius.

### *The Gnostic Crisis*

These were but the anticipations of the great crisis which was to break out in the middle of the second century. The last survivors of the apostolic age felt then that they were faced with an entirely new struggle, and a very painful one. "My God," cried St. Polycarp, "to what times hast Thou preserved me!" The apostolic age had of course had its heretics, but these had worked in the background, remaining concealed in their hiding-places,<sup>3</sup> but now that the apostles had disappeared, they worked openly and organised their sects.<sup>4</sup> Hegesippus rightly attributes their boldness to the disappearance of the apostles and the last survivors of their generation, but other causes helped to give the Gnostic crisis a virulence which it had not previously displayed in the bosom of the Christian Church. For it was at first a development in the Church itself. The Gospel had penetrated into the most cultivated spheres of the Hellenic and Roman worlds; this invasion led to anxiety on the part of the pagan controversialists, and by reaction, to replies from the Christian apologists. On both sides the debate was carried on by thinkers and men of letters. In this world, so new to her, the Church found both her defenders and her opponents; she also found some dangerous disciples who adopted her teaching but only in order to disfigure it. Such was, for instance, Tatian, who as we have seen was at first a disciple of Justin and an apologist like his master, but afterwards became a sectary and

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Hegesippus, quoted by Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, III, xxxii, p. 7: "Until that time (the end of the apostolic age) the Church remained as a pure virgin, and without stain: those who endeavoured to change the sound rule of salutary preaching worked in darkness and as in a secret place. . . ."

<sup>4</sup> Hegesippus, *ibid.*, cf. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata*, VII, xvii, p. 106: "The teaching of Our Lord, during his lifetime, began with Augustus and ended about the middle of the reign of Tiberius; the preaching of the apostles, to the close of the ministry of Paul, ended under Nero. The heresiarchs, on the other hand, began much later, in the time of the king Hadrian (117-138), and lasted until the time of Antoninus the Elder (138-161). Such was Basilides, although he boasts of having had for his master Glaucias, whom they describe as the interpreter of Peter. In the same way they pretend that Valentine heard Theodas, a disciple of Paul. As for Mark, he belonged to the same period, and lived with them as an older man amongst younger ones, and after him Simon was for a short time a disciple of Peter."

the head of a sect. The danger was all the greater because these men very soon found accomplices amongst their fellow members in the Church. The heresiarchs recruited their disciples from amongst the unstable and ambitious whom the truth had satisfied, for a time, but who soon experienced the attractions of the gnosis, and too easily succumbed to them.

### *The Christian Reaction*

These new perils, resulting from the rapid growth of the Church and its penetration into the world of philosophy and letters, led to a serious and painful crisis towards the middle of the second century. We see, so to speak, a shudder running through all the churches, so closely bound to each other. The danger, everywhere felt, led everywhere to the same reaction: episcopal authority asserted itself; the bonds of catholicity were drawn closer; the Roman Church took in hand the defence of all the churches and gave to them an efficacious lead; and all the Christians, grouped around their leaders, remained linked through them to the apostles, the witnesses and delegates of Christ and founders of the churches. It was then that the theology of tradition, elaborated by Irenæus, was set forth by Tertullian in striking formulas. At the same time the discipline of Christian initiation was organised in a definite and strict manner, and the Church imposed upon candidates for baptism a long and severe catechumenate, concealing her mysteries beneath the veil of the Secret. Also the liturgy, hitherto freely improvised according to traditional schemes, was now expressed in formularies drawn up by authority and obligatory upon all. Thus in its various domains the Church organised its life, formulated its prayer and its belief, and codified its laws. But its authority, obeyed with docility, did not stifle the Spirit. Over against the multiplication of sects, the great Church appeared more clearly than ever as the Body of Christ and the Mother of the Christian. "For where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God, and where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church and all grace; and the Spirit is the Truth. Hence those who do not belong to her do not receive from the maternal breasts the food of life, they do not drink at the well which springs from the Body of Christ."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Irenæus, *Adversus haereses*, III, xxiv, p. 1.

*The Historic Sources*

One great difficulty in the study of Gnosticism arises from the fact that the writings of the Gnostics, or at any rate of the leaders, have in great part disappeared; and the most definite information we possess is given by the opponents of the heresy. Now, the Fathers of the Church did not aim at handing down information to posterity: their sole aim was to defend the faithful of their day. Accordingly, they brought to light the most vulnerable side of Gnosticism. Again, they attacked by preference those Gnostics who lived and worked in their own time rather than heresiarchs who had already disappeared. Thus, the detailed information given by Irenæus tells us much more about the Valentinians of the end of the second century than about Valentine himself or about Basilides.<sup>6</sup>

*Cerinthus*

The Gnostics of the end of the apostolic age, Cerinthus, Saturnil and Cerdon, have left in history scarcely any trace other than their names. But Cerinthus had greatly disturbed the churches of Asia Minor, and the vehemence with which St. John opposed him shows that the docetic christology taught by this heresiarch was a great danger for the Christians of Asia.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> These considerations have been set forth very forcibly by E. de Faye (*Gnostiques et Gnosticisme*, 1925, pp. 3-32), but this historian makes the great mistake of rejecting entirely the testimonies of the Catholic controversialists, and of constructing his history only from the Gnostic fragments which we possess. He is obliged to emphasise and extend the lines in order to construct an edifice out of these. Hence through prejudice he is forced only too often to make use of his imagination (cf. *infra*, p. 627, n. 30). More recent historians have not shared this exaggerated mistrust, and the discoveries of important Gnostic texts made in the course of recent years have confirmed the testimony of Irenæus (cf. K. Schmidt, *Pistis Sophia*, 1925, p. xc; J. Lebreton, *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, p. 103). In the short account which we give above, we rely by preference on the texts of the Gnostics themselves, but we also profit by the information furnished by their opponents, especially when we are able to test its accuracy.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. I, pp. 483 *et seq.* and 484, n. 1; C. Schmidt, *Gespräche Jesu mit seinen Jüngern*, pp. 403-452. Schmidt infers (p. 452) that Cerinthus was not a Judaiser, but a Gnostic; his activity had Asia Minor as its sphere; it made a deep impression there, as is attested by three independent witnesses, Irenæus, the Alogi, and the author of the *Epistula Apostolorum*. See in the same sense: Lagrange, *Saint Jean*, pp. lxxii *et seq.* Cerinthus distinguished between Jesus and the Christ. Christ, one of the higher æons, descended upon Jesus, the son of the Demiurge, and afterwards departed from him to return

These first heretics might be a danger to the Christian communities, but their influence was not very widespread. It does not seem that any of them wrote anything; moreover, the Gnosticism which they displayed was a Judaizing form, or at any rate was called forth by current Jewish speculation which either attracted or else repelled them. With the reign of Hadrian, Gnosticism changed its character: Greek influence became predominant, and its interpreters were no longer ignorant sectaries but writers, philosophers and exegetes who were often not without talent.<sup>8</sup>

Furthermore, this Gnosticism had its centre no longer in some far-off province of Asia Minor, but instead in the great intellectual centres of the Empire, especially at Alexandria, and then at Rome. And those who were carried away by it were no longer recruited only from amongst superstitious folk, dazzled by magic, like the disciples of Simon, but they were more and more, as Origen wrote, "cultivated minds, thirsting to know the doctrines of Christianity."<sup>9</sup>

### *Basilides*

Of these new masters, the first we know is Basilides. He taught in the reign of Hadrian<sup>10</sup> at Alexandria; <sup>11</sup> he wrote works which

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into the Pleroma. Harnack, who likes to regard the Gnostics as the forerunners of the great theologians, writes on this subject (*Dogmengeschichte*, Vol. I, p. 271, n. 2): "Thus Cerinthus is the father of the doctrine of the two natures." That is a remark which cannot be taken seriously.

<sup>8</sup> St. Jerome, who will not be accused of excessive indulgence towards heretics, writes (*In Oseam*, II, x): "No one can construct a heresy unless he has a brilliant talent and gifts of nature, all of which come from God. Such was Valentine and Marcion, who, as we read, were very learned. Such was Bardesanes, whose talent was admired by the philosophers themselves."

<sup>9</sup> *Contra Celsum*, III, xii: "As the greatness of Christianity appeared not only, as Celsus would have it, to servile minds, but also to many cultivated minds amongst the Greeks, it was inevitable that heresies should arise, not always through rivalries and jealousies, but because a greater number of cultivated minds was eager to understand the teachings of Christianity. Hence it came about that the divine teachings transmitted to all were diversely understood, and so heresies arose which derived their names from those who had admired the principle of the doctrine but who had been led in different directions by various ideas." A little later (*ibid.*, III, xiii) Origen ends by formulating this bold rule: "Paul seems to me to have written admirably that heresies must arise to distinguish those who are proved: for just as in medicine or philosophy, those pass who have studied the different schools . . . so I regard as the wisest Christian one who has carefully studied the heresies attached to Judaism and Christianity."

<sup>10</sup> Clement, *Stromata*, VII, xvii, 106.

<sup>11</sup> Irenæus, *Adversus haereses*, I, xxiv, 1.

seem to have been lengthy,<sup>12</sup> though only some fragments remain.<sup>13</sup> The problem which led to his speculations and those of all the Gnostics who came after him was the origin of evil.<sup>14</sup>

"Whence comes evil, and how does it arise?"<sup>15</sup> Like Plato, Basilides tries to solve this fundamental and disturbing problem, and does so by a metaphysical speculation. In a long fragment found in Clement, he considers the sufferings of the martyrs, which were often a scandal in the eyes of the pagans.<sup>16</sup> He defends God's Providence, and affirms that no one suffers who has not deserved to do so. If it is objected that many of the martyrs were innocent, he replies that, even if they had not sinned, at least they had a disposition to sin; if pressed, he takes refuge in metempsychosis, claiming that the martyr, by virtue of a grace which God gives him, expiates the faults of a previous existence. Lastly, if one urges the sufferings of Christ, he affirms with an imperturbable audacity: "If I am pressed, I will say that a man, whosoever you may name, is always a man, whereas God is just. For, as it has been said, no one is free from stain."<sup>17</sup>

This speculation which stops at nothing already tells us what Gnosticism will be: faced with the Cross of Christ, Basilides is obstinate; his philosophy is dearer to him and more sacred than his religion. If Jesus suffered, He must have sinned.

This explanation of pain as the fruit of personal sin involves the whole human race in a heavy sentence. Nevertheless, Basilides discerns in this sinful mass an élite, and here again he points to the path which all the Gnostics will follow: one of the great attractions of their doctrine consists in their claim to constitute a separate caste, divided from the rest of humanity. They alone arrive at the truth, not through teaching but by natural intuition. For Basilides, this natural intuition is faith; for the disciples of Valentine, faith is the lot of the simple, and gnosis the privilege of the perfect. But

<sup>12</sup> A long fragment quoted by Clement (*Stromata*, IV, xii, 81) is taken from Book XXIII of the *Exegetica* of Basilides.

<sup>13</sup> These fragments are found for the most part in Clement; an important fragment is included in *Acta Archelai*, lxxvii (cf. below, p. 509).

<sup>14</sup> Epiphanius, *Haereses*, XXIV, vi: "This evil sect had its beginning in the study and the explanation of the origin of evil."

<sup>15</sup> Tertullian, *De praescriptione haereticorum*, vii: "Unde malum et quare."

<sup>16</sup> Thus at Lyons in 177, after the death of the martyrs, the pagans said: "Where is their God, and what use has been the religion which they preferred to their lives?"

<sup>17</sup> This text is summarised and commented on by E. de Faye, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-44. He regards it as "a striking advance on the ecclesiastical Christianity of the time."

both agree that the higher gifts arise from a difference of nature. Faith, as Clement objects to Basilides, is no longer "the reasonable disposition of a free mind."<sup>18</sup>

### *The Gnostic Emanations*

Problems of moral theology were the ones which especially attracted the attention of Clement, but Basilides did not confine his attention to these. Inheriting the pagan gnosis, he transported into Christian theology the system of emanations,<sup>19</sup> and whereas Valentine couples together all these deified abstractions, he presents them in a series of individual progressions, at the summit being a unique principle whom he calls the ungenerated Father. He is followed by the *Nous*, the *Logos*, *Phronesis*, *Sophia*, *Dynamis*, Justice, and Peace.<sup>20</sup>

All these personified abstractions encumbered in that time the Hellenic and Roman pantheon: here were adored Peace, Concord, Victory, and above all Fortune. The pagans regarded these not only as deified allegories, but as true divinities to which, as to other gods and goddesses, they offered sacrifices, dedicated altars, and consecrated *ex voto* offerings.<sup>21</sup> The Gnostics, with Basilides at their head, were carried on by this stream: like the pagans, they delighted to honour these abstract divinities, whose personality seemed to them sufficiently certain to justify worship and to be the subject of a legend, but at the same time was sufficiently vague not to offend sensitive minds by an apparently gross anthropomorphism. The avatars of *Sophia* are no more divine than those of the Homeric gods, but they are more distant, and are pictured in a dreamy setting and no longer in a naive and altogether human epic.

It was not only the Roman religion, abstract and colourless, that

<sup>18</sup> *Stromata*, V, i, 3, 2. Cf. *Stromata*, II, iii, 10; IV, xiii, 89. Cf. Liechtenhahn, *Die Offenbarung im Gnosticismus* (Göttingen, 1901), pp. 87, 99; De Faye, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

<sup>19</sup> This point admits of no doubt: the Ogdoad of Basilides is explicitly mentioned by Clement (*Strom.*, IV, xxv, 162, 1). De Faye himself admits this; he adds, as is likely, that this speculation "doubtless formed part of the more secret teaching reserved for the initiated."

<sup>20</sup> Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 95 *et seq.*

<sup>21</sup> On the cultus of abstract divinities at this time, cf. J. Toutain, *Les cultes païens dans l'Empire romain*, Vol. I, pp. 413-437; Wissowa, *Religion der Römer*, pp. 83 *et seq.*, especially pp. 327-338; L. Deubner, art. *Personifikationen*, in Roscher's *Lexikon*, Vol. III, col. 2067-2169; also *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 3-9.



appealed to the imagination of the Gnostics, but above all the pagan gnosis, which arose from the oriental religions and spread through the Hellenic world. Thus, already in the first century of our era, Plutarch, in his *Isis et Osiris*, which claimed to set forth the religion of Zoroaster, described the two great rival deities, "Horomazes, born of pure light, and Areimanios, born of darkness." And below the former, described as the good god, we have six deities created by him, those of Benevolence, Truth, Justice, Wisdom, Riches, and Joy, and again, beneath these six first emanations there are twenty-four others, giving us already the thirty Æons of the Gnostic pleroma.<sup>22</sup> The Egyptian religion also leads to the same conception: the primitive Ogdoad is found in the two rival systems of Heliopolis and Hermopolis.<sup>23</sup> Adopted by Basilides, the idea will remain in later Gnostic systems the nucleus of speculations which each writer will endeavour to develop.

### *Good and Evil*

In all these gnosés, the emanations imagined between the supreme God and matter are so many intermediaries which link together these two infinitely distant beings: the supreme God is not contaminated by direct contact with the material world, and yet this world, so lowly and impure, is not entirely separated from the godhead. Once again there arises the troublesome problem: whence arises evil? In a myth in the *Timæus*, Plato had explained the mixture of good and evil here below by the action of secondary deities. This mythical explanation, which long influenced Hellenic thought, also dominated Gnosticism, but, especially in Basilides, the Platonist influence was modified by a dualistic current of thought already manifest in the text of Plutarch mentioned above. Antagonism between good and evil, light and darkness, is at the origin of all things: this struggle which goes on around us and within us is eternal and necessary. This idea, which the Iranian mythology had expressed with such definiteness, will always weigh heavily on Gnosticism, not only on the luxuriant speculations of Basilides, Valentine and their disciples, but also on the feeble and weak theology of Marcion, and beginning with the third century,

<sup>22</sup> *Isis et Osiris*, xlvii. Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, p. 96 and n. 2.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Amelineau, *Essai sur le gnosticisme égyptien*, Paris, 1887, p. 294.

on Manichæism and all the sects which issued from it. In point of fact, an anti-Manichæan treatise has conserved a long fragment of Basilides in which this dualism is already manifest.

In his thirteenth book, Basilides, investigating the origin of good and evil, explains it in this way, according to a theory borrowed from the "barbarians": "In the beginning, there existed Light and Darkness. These originated from themselves and were not generated by any other principle. They lived as they pleased and according to their respective natures. But when they came to know each other, Darkness desired Light, and followed after it in order to participate in it. Light, on the contrary, did not desire to participate in Darkness, but only to see it. It saw Darkness as in a mirror, and a reflection of Light fell upon Darkness. Darkness thus seized, not the true Light, but an appearance of Light. That is why the perfect good does not exist in this world, and why there is so little of good. Yet, thanks to this reflection of Light, Darkness has been able to engender an appearance leading to the mixture of light it had conceived. This is the creature which we see."<sup>24</sup>

Under the discreet guise of this myth, the solution of the problem of evil presented by Basilides is the old Iranian dualism, the fatal antagonism which eternally opposes Light to Darkness, with the deep pessimism which accompanies all these imaginations. There is some good here below, but only a little! It is only a reflection of the Light, seen for an instant in a mirror and then lost for ever. Similarly the followers of Simon said: we can attain only to a partial image of Wisdom; in itself it is beyond our grasp.<sup>25</sup>

### *Archontes and his Angels*

Pressed by this dualism, Basilides, as Clement points out, goes so far as to make a god of the Devil;<sup>26</sup> over against the supreme God, he sets up Archontes, the head of the evil angels and the god of the Jews.<sup>27</sup> On the day of the baptism of Jesus, this Archontes was struck by terror when hearing the heavenly voice and wit-

<sup>24</sup> This passage is quoted in the *Acta Archelai*, lxxvii. We give a summary of the text. It is given in its entirety in *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, p. 97, n. 2.

<sup>25</sup> *Recognitions*, II, xxi: ". . . pro qua (sapientia), inquit, Graeci et barbari confligentes, imaginem quidem ejus aliqua ex parte videre potuerunt, ipsam vero ut est penitus ignorarunt, quippe quae apud illum primum omnium et solum habitaret deum."

<sup>26</sup> *Stromata*, IV, xii, 85, 1.

<sup>27</sup> Irenæus, *Adversus haereses*, I, xxiv, 4.

nessing the unexpected apparition of the dove, and this fear was to him, in the words of the sacred text, "the beginning of wisdom."<sup>28</sup> In all these features the gnosis of Basilides resembles Marcionism: in both we have the same opposition between the supreme God and the god of the Jews, and the same unexpected appearance of the Messiah which terrifies Archontes, and the sudden invasion of the domain of the latter by the supreme God.

Around these ideas Basilides himself or his disciples will attach innumerable fancies: from *Sophia* and *Dynamis* are born the first angels, who constitute the first heaven; then other angels, arising from the first, make the second heaven, and in this way 365 heavens have been made successively. That is why, say the Basilidians, there are 365 days in the year. Similar imaginations are found in the pagan gnosis.<sup>29</sup>

We have only a fragmentary knowledge of this gnosis of Basilides, but we know enough to discern its religious character. At first sight several Christian features appear which might deceive us. In the Ogdoad we find even a Word, a Wisdom, and a Power. Elsewhere we find a Christ, and read of his baptism and death, his martyrs, and the faith. All these Christian reminiscences are scattered over the surface of the system; they do not affect its depths, in which all remains human and pagan. The supreme God is removed to an inaccessible distance; between him and the world, there is a chain of intermediaries, a fragile chain woven of dreams, which can neither guide our faith nor support our effort nor uphold our prayers. Here below, the miserable material world is illumined only by a fugitive reflection of Light perceived for an instant in a mirror. In this darkness only the Gnostics can see the road to be followed; this discernment on their part is natural, just as the blindness of others is a matter of fate. Pride may be flattered by this privilege, but religion will find therein nothing to uplift it towards God, nor to incline it towards mankind.

### *Valentine*

All these speculations of Basilides were continued and developed by one who was the most influential theologian among the Gnostics

<sup>28</sup> Clement, *Stromata*, II, viii, 36, 1; cf. xxviii, 2, and *Excerpta Theodoti*, xvi.

<sup>29</sup> E.g. in Plutarch (*De defectu oraculorum*, xxi-xxii), the Egyptian myth of 183 worlds arranged in a triangle round the plain of truth. Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. I, p. 78.

of the second century, Valentine.<sup>30</sup> "He came to Rome under Hyginus, flourished under Pius, and remained there until Anicetus";<sup>31</sup> he therefore spent there some thirty years (136-165). We see already by this fact the decisive influence of the Roman Church. It was this church that the leaders of the sects endeavoured before all to conquer or at least to attack, in the conviction that from thence their action would spread throughout all the churches. Certainly, during the second half of the second century and the first years of the third, the Valentinian sect was, of all the heretical sects, the most numerous and the most powerful.<sup>32</sup> It owed its diffusion undoubtedly to the brilliant talent of its master, but also to his insidious cunning. Basilides already distinguished amongst his disciples the profane from the initiated; to the latter he reserved the mysteries of the gnosis. This distinction was stressed by the Valentinians, and the common teaching was clothed in the appearances of orthodox Christianity. Thus one can read through the letter of Ptolemy to Flora<sup>33</sup> without noticing any esoteric Gnosticism. The opponents of the Valentinians, Irenæus and Tertullian,<sup>34</sup> denounced this deceitful manner of acting: "When the Valentinians," says Irenæus, "meet with people belonging to the great Church, they attract them by speaking as we speak; they complain that we treat them as excommunicate, although on both sides the doctrines are the same. Then they gradually disturb the faith by their questions, and they make disciples of those who do not resist, and take them apart to expound to them the unspeakable mystery

<sup>30</sup> De Faye cannot praise him sufficiently (cf. *Introduction à l'étude du gnosticisme*, 1903, pp. 81-85; *Gnostiques et Gnosticisme*, 1925, pp. 57-74). A poet and a metaphysician, Valentine is also a very profound Christian moralist with a highly speculative mind: "he resembles the apostle Paul . . . with this difference, that the author of the *Colossians* . . . remains fundamentally a Jew; his speculation does not go beyond certain limits, and remains subordinate to the moral and psychological point of view. Applied to him, the term 'intellectualist' would not be fitting. On the contrary, as soon as Valentine begins to speculate, his thought ascends and takes free flight. Nurtured in Hellenism, or rather in Platonism, it brings forth wonderful metaphysical symbols." We are somewhat surprised at the warmth of this panegyric, which is hardly justified by the texts which have come down to us.

<sup>31</sup> Irenæus, *Adversus haereses*, III, iv, 3. Tertullian (*Adversus Valentinianos*, IV) narrates that "Valentine had hoped for the episcopate, for he had great talents and eloquence; another, recommended by martyrdom, was preferred to him; Valentine in indignation broke away from the orthodox Church."

<sup>32</sup> This fact is attested by Tertullian (*Adv. Valent.*, I) and by Origen (*In Ezechiel. homiliae*, II, v).

<sup>33</sup> Cf. *infra*, p. 636.

<sup>34</sup> Irenæus, *ibid.*, III, xv, 2. Tertullian, *Adv. Valent.*, I.

of their Pleroma." Tertullian adds: "If you ask them quite simply to explain their mysteries to you, they reply, with a grave face, that these are very deep indeed. If you press them further, they enunciate the common faith in equivocal formulae. They do not trust their mysteries, even to their disciples, until they have made certain of them; they have the secret of persuading before instructing." We may add that the Gnostic propaganda was not directed to the pagans, it sought to corrupt the Catholics. Hence one is not surprised by the severity of its opponents nor by the hesitations of historians seeking to reconstitute a teaching which was always shadowy and which took many different forms according to the various sects, and which is known to us only by fragments of Gnostic books or by the attacks of the Catholic controversialists.

### *The Problem of Evil*

Valentine, like Basilides, tried to solve the problem of evil, and he also sought the solution in the hypothesis of a spiritual germ planted in matter:

Valentine says: "Just as in this formation (of man), fear took hold of the angels when they heard him utter higher things than they had expected after his creation, through the One who had placed in him invisibly a germ of higher nature which gave him such boldness; so also among the generations of men in the world, the works of men cause fear in those who have made them, such as statues, images, and all the things which human hands fashion in the name of God. For Adam, formed in the name of the Man who was before him, caused fear of the Man who was before him, as if this former Man were truly present within him, and (the angels) were alarmed and hastened to efface their work." <sup>35</sup>

We find here once more the mythological elements which Basilides had already utilised: a superior germ was deposited in this material world; the angels, jealous creators of their own work, were alarmed by this higher nature, whose excellence frightened them. We also detect the dualism which dominates Gnosticism: in face of the supreme God, whose intervention is eminently benevolent but unexpected and exceptional, the demiurges, angels, and archontes are secondary forces dominating the material world who are alarmed at the divine element which suddenly appears in

<sup>35</sup> *Stromata*, II, viii, 36, 2-4.

it. Lastly, we recognise in this fragment the myth of the Primal Man, the prototype of Adam himself and of the whole human race. This legend, oriental in origin and widespread in Judaism, will reappear in later Gnosticism and especially in Manichæism.<sup>36</sup>

### *Death and Life*

The material world thus contains some image of the divine world, but an imperfect and distant one: "Just as the image is inferior to the distant face," says Valentine, "so also the world is inferior to the living Æon. What was then the cause of the image? The majesty of the face which gave the painter the model, in order to be honoured with its name." In the élite, this image knows itself and the germ lives; this redeemed race has to fight against death, which comes not from God but from the Demiurge; it triumphs over death by making it die within them and by them:

Valentine, in a homily, says textually: From the beginning, you are immortal and sons of eternal life, and you have willed to share in death in order that you may spend and exhaust it, and that death may die in you and by you. For when you break up the world and are not yourselves broken up, you are masters of creation and of the whole corruption. . . .<sup>37</sup>

St. Paul likewise had spoken about this struggle between death and life in the Christian, and he had similarly pointed to the end at which all should aim, the absorption of death by life. But in spite of the similarity of expression, the idea is quite different. For St. Paul, the life which is to triumph over death is the life of Christ implanted in the Christian at baptism, which gradually overcomes death within him. But for Valentine it is a higher germ, deposited in the elect at the moment of his creation and overcoming death by its natural power. The Apostle speaks to us of a redemption, but Gnosticism is a cosmology.

From this dualism, always despising matter, there arose also the docetic Christology taught by Valentine. In his letter to Agathopous, Valentine wrote: "Having supported all things, Jesus was con-

<sup>36</sup> On this speculation in Judaism, see Bousset-Gressmann, *Die Religion des Judentums*, Tübingen, 1926, pp. 352 *et seq.*, on its oriental origin cf. *ibid.*, p. 489.

<sup>37</sup> *Strom.*, IV, xiii, 89-90. This text and the preceding one are commented on by Clement in this chapter. Cf. Preuschen, *op. cit.*, pp. 399-400; De Faye, *Gnostiques et Gnosticisme*, p. 60.

tinant; he assured divinity for himself; he ate and drank in a manner which was peculiar to him, without expelling his food; continence was so strong in him that food was not corrupted in him, because there was not in him any principle of corruption.”<sup>38</sup>

### *The Pleroma*

All this teaching constituted in Valentine's theology only the common doctrine set forth to all disciples;<sup>39</sup> but in the background there lay hidden a revelation reserved for the initiates. As in Basilides so also here, this esoteric teaching concerned chiefly the Pleroma, that is the divine world constituted by the Æons. In a long Valentinian fragment quoted by St. Epiphanius,<sup>40</sup> the exposition of these mysteries begins thus:

<sup>38</sup> *Strom.*, III, vii, 59. It must be admitted that Clement does not reject this strange theory, but contents himself with the remark: “We therefore embrace continence through love of the Lord, and for its own beauty.” Elsewhere he himself develops similar ideas (VI, ix, 71): “He ate, not in order to maintain his body, which was maintained by a holy power, but in order not to arouse suspicions in those who were with him.” The author of the *Acta Johannis* will go farther still.

<sup>39</sup> The theory of the passions is presented in the same way. Clement (*Strom.*, II, xx, 112-114) recalls in this connection the ideas of Basilides, Isidore and Valentine. According to Basilides, the passions are forces from without which graft themselves on to the soul and cause in it the animal instincts of the wolf, the monkey, the lion, and the goat. In this conception, as Clement remarks, man is, as it were, a Trojan horse, carrying within himself a whole army of different spirits. Isidore modifies this theory. He fears that it could be invoked to excuse all crimes. It would be said: “I was forced so to act.” So, like the Pythagoreans, he takes refuge in the theory of the two souls. “As to Valentine, he explained himself thus in a letter: Only one is good, He who gives force in manifesting himself by his Son, and it is by him alone that the heart can be pure and every evil spirit be expelled from it. For the spirits which inhabit man in great number do not allow him to purify himself, but each carries on his work by corrupting him with evil desires. The heart seems to me to be regarded somewhat as a caravansery: it is opened and excavated and often filled with dung; those who pass by conduct themselves ill and do not care, for it is not their own house. That is how the heart is treated, unless it be watched. It is not the object of Providence; it is impure, and serves as a lodging for many demons. But when the Father, who is good, looks upon it, it is sanctified, shines with light, and so the possessor of this heart is happy, for he will see God.” Cf. Preuschen, *op. cit.*, p. 401; Schwartz, *Hermes*, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 96. This idea was subsequently developed by the Valentinians: *Philosophumena*, VI, xxxiv. Thus, according to Valentine, if the heart is invaded in this way, it is because Providence does not watch over it. Clement continues: “Why, then, was not this soul from the beginning the object of Providence? Let them tell us this.” He goes on to show that salvation comes, not from a natural necessity, but from the conversion of the soul which is obedient to God.

<sup>40</sup> Epiphanius, *Haer.*, XXXI, v-vi. Harnack (*Geschichte der Literatur*, Vol. I, p. 178) regards this text as an authentic fragment of Valentine. Preuschen (*op.*

I come to tell you about unnameable, ineffable, and supercelestial mysteries, which can be comprehended neither by the Powers, nor the Dominations, nor the subordinate Forces, nor by any (creature arising from) mixture, but which are revealed only to the Thought of the Immutable.<sup>41</sup>

### Theogony

This mysterious theogony is related to that of Basilides, but differs from it mainly in two features. The divine life propagates itself within the Pleroma no longer by individual emissions but in couples. Moreover, besides the group of the eight first Æons we have now a second group formed of ten Æons, then a third formed of twelve. Thus the Pleroma consists no longer only of the Ogdoad but also of the Decad and the Dodecad;<sup>42</sup> and we find once again the sacred number of thirty Æons, already set forth in the speculations of the pagan gnosis of Alexandria, as narrated by Plutarch.<sup>43</sup>

In this dim distance, the secret of which Valentine claims to reveal, the Pleroma is not always perceived in the same manner. Other texts show us at the origin of things, not the couple *Bythos-Sige*, but the Father ungenerated and alone, who at some time willed to engender and to form the primitive couple, *Nous* and *Aletheia*.<sup>44</sup> But at any rate the various Valentinian texts which have

*cit.*, p. 398) regards it rather as the work of disciples of Valentine. Holl, in his note on Epiphanius (p. 390), sees in it "one of the earliest sources of Valentini-anism." This theogony has been translated and commented on by Dibelius in *Zeitschr. f. N. T. Wissensch.*, Vol. IX, 1908, pp. 329-340. Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 105, 110, n. 3; Volker, *Quellen*, p. 60.

<sup>41</sup> It was in fact through immediate revelation by the Logos that Valentine claimed to derive his own knowledge of the divine mysteries: "Valentine affirms that he saw a new-born child; he asked him who he was; the child replied that he was the Logos. Starting with this, Valentine sets forth a myth worthy of tragedy, and undertakes the staging of his whole heresy" (Hippolytus, *Philos.*, VI, xlii, 2). Cf. Liechtenhahn, *Die Offenbarung im Gnosticismus*, p. 24.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. pseudo-Tertullian, xii: "Valentine says that in the first place there existed *Bythos* and *Sige*; from them proceeded *Nous* and *Aletheia*; from these came *Logos* and *Zoë*, by whom were produced *Anthropos* and *Ecclesia*. From the two last mentioned arose twelve Æons, and from *Logos* and *Zoë* ten more. Thus was formed the trental of Æons which, in the Pleroma, consists of the Ogdoad, the Decad and the Dodecad." On this treatise by pseudo-Tertullian, cf. Harnack, *Chronologie*, Vol. II, pp. 221-223; D'Alès, *Saint Hippolyte*, pp. 75-77.

<sup>43</sup> *Isis et Osiris*, xlvii.

<sup>44</sup> According to an account given in Hippolytus, VI, xxix, 5-xxx, 9. This text is translated and commented on in *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 107-109.



come down to us have the common characteristic of describing the propagation of life in the divine Pleroma as due to the pressure of concupiscence (προυνικία).

In this way the Æons combine, fecundate each other, and give birth to new Æons which, like the former, are androgynous, and, like them, are also filled with desires.<sup>45</sup> We shall find similar ideas in the Manichæan gnosis, but in the latter we have to deal not with divine Æons but with demons, impure Archontes, male and female, which allow themselves to be seduced by the Light Maiden.<sup>46</sup> Thus this ambitious gnosis displays the blemish of its origin, and combines indecent imaginations with its metaphysical dreams.<sup>47</sup>

To this theogony is joined a legend of the Fall: the last Æon, *Sophia*, falls, and has to be rescued. In the Valentinian text quoted by Hippolytus, this fall is described in these terms:

The last of the Æons, *Sophia*, contemplating this whole series of emanations, ascended to their origin, the Father. She reflected that the other Æons had engendered by coupling, but that the Father had generated alone. She desired to imitate him, forgetting that she was not, like the Father, ungenerated. But it is only in that which is not generated that all the generating principles are unified; in generated beings, on the other hand, the feminine principle gives the essence and the masculine principle give the form. *Sophia* brought forth therefore only what she was able, a formless and disordered essence, and that is

<sup>45</sup> In a Valentinian text quoted by Epiphanius (*Haer.*, XXXI, v, 7, cf. *supra*, p. 630, n. 40), the origin of the Dodecad and the Decad is described as follows: "Then, by the will of *Bythos* who contains all, *Anthropos* and *Ecclesia*, recalling the paternal words, came together and brought forth the Dodecad of the male and female desirers. . . . And after that, *Logos* and *Zoë* also formed the fruit of their union; they united together, and their union was the will, and being united they brought forth the Decad of desirers, likewise male and female." Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, p. 110, n. 3.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Cumont, *Recherches sur le Manichéisme*, Vol. I, Brussels, 1908, pp. 54 *et seq.*

<sup>47</sup> Origen writes as follows in *Contra Celsum*, VI, xxxv: "The Valentinians call 'prounikos' a certain wisdom, because of the actions of their *Sophia*, a symbol of whom they see in the woman with an issue of blood of twelve years' standing. Celsum was deceived thereby—he who mingles completely all the sayings of the Greeks, the barbarians and the heretics. He writes: 'A power which comes from a certain Virgin *Prounikos*.'" In the extensive part attributed by the Valentinians to concupiscence, Bousset sees a trace of the religion of the Great Mother: "This 'Meter' is, in the system of these Gnostics, also at one time the stern, austere goddess, the Mother, who dwells in heaven, and at other times the licentious goddess of love, the great courtesan (*Prunikon*) who, e.g. in the Simonian system, takes the form of the prostitute Helena, in whose worship all kinds of obscene rites were celebrated" (article, *Valentinus*, in *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 11th edn., p. 853).

what Moses meant when he said: "The earth was invisible and disordered." The birth of this abortion disturbed the whole Pleroma. All the Æons begged the Father to have pity on Sophia. Then, at the Father's orders, *Nous* and *Aletheia* brought forth Christ and the Holy Spirit, to give to the abortion a distinct form, and to console Sophia and bring to an end her lamentations. Then the Father produced of himself an Æon, *Stauros* (the Cross), or *Horos* (the Limit), to act as a boundary to the Pleroma.<sup>48</sup>

We see in this passage how the Gnostic speculation, with its wholly fantastic development, yet made use of Christian theology and of biblical memories. But all that was only a blind: the account in Genesis of the origin of the earth and the formless chaos has manifestly nothing in common with the story of Sophia or with the birth of her abortion. It is still more evident that the two supernumerary Æons, Christ and the Holy Spirit, are not due to a profound Christian inspiration, although they betray an echo of the Christian doctrine and a desire to combine the Gospel with the gnosis. Jesus appears in turn, but, as in many other Gnostic systems, he is distinct from the Christ. Whereas Christ is a supernumerary Æon produced by the Father alone, Jesus is the common fruit of the thirty Æons of the Pleroma; he joins himself to Sophia, who still remains disturbed by her fall, and purifies her from her passions.<sup>49</sup>

### *Pistis Sophia*

With this theme of the fall of Sophia, other Gnostics will combine many other fantasies. We find them developed especially in *Pistis Sophia*, a work which probably belongs to the end of the third century.<sup>50</sup> The risen Christ describes his ascension to the apostles.

<sup>48</sup> Hippolytus, *Philos.*, VI, xxx, 6; xxxi, 6. The passage, too long for complete citation, is summarised above. On this Gnostic conception of *Stauros*, cf. Bousset, *Platons Weltseele und das Kreuz Christi*, in *Zeitschr. für N. T. Wissenschaft.*, Vol. XIV, 1913, pp. 273-285, especially pp. 281 *et seq.* These speculations involve the Platonist theory of the world-soul. Cf. Justin, *Apologia*, I, lx, referring to Plato, *Timaeus*, xxxvi. Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 108-109, and n. 1.

<sup>49</sup> One of these passions, namely fear, becomes a "psychic essence." The Gnostics identify it with the Demiurge, and see in it *Hebdomade*, an intermediary between the Ogdoad, to which belongs Sophia, whence it comes, and the material world, of which it is the Demiurge. Cf. *ibid.*, VI, xxxii, 5-9.

<sup>50</sup> This work, originally written in Greek, exists now only in a Coptic version. The Coptic text has been edited by C. Schmidt in the collection *Coptica*, edited

Clothed in a vestment of light bearing the names of all the Æons, he passed through the heavens. Beneath the thirteenth Æon, he encountered *Pistis Sophia*, who had fallen from thence. She had aspired to the supreme light, but was punished by the jealousy of her companions, especially of *Authades*, and was cast down into the chaos. She then began to pray to the supreme light; thirteen penances were imposed on her—as many penances as Æons. Jesus tells his disciples of the supplications of Sophia, and immediately one of the disciples recognises each of these chants in some one of the psalms or hymns of the Bible. Here again we notice the endeavour of the Gnostics, anxious to connect themselves with the Christian revelation, to interpret the psalms and hymns, and even the *Odes of Solomon* as the lamentations of Sophia, and to claim for this exegesis the authority of Jesus Himself. In these prayers there are some pathetic details, but on the whole they are tedious.

### *Revelation According to the Gnosis*

The theogony which we have set forth according to Valentine was claimed to be a revelation. This must be emphasised here. Valentine was not only a metaphysician, but presented himself as a prophet. In this connection we may mention the Valentinian psalm given by Hippolytus.<sup>51</sup> The author of the *Philosophumena* first quotes the well-known passage in the second letter of Plato: "Around the King of all beings are all beings, and he is the end of all, and the cause of all beautiful things. The second is surrounded by the seconds, and the third by the thirds." Justin<sup>52</sup> and Athenagoras<sup>53</sup> offered explanations of this enigma; Valentine presented one in turn: "The King of all is the Father, *Bythos*, Father of all the Æons; the second things are the Æons which are outside the *Horos*; the third things are the whole universe, which is outside the *Horos* and the *Pleroma*." Valentine describes this universe in a few words in a psalm, in which he begins from below and not, as Plato, from above. He writes thus:

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by H. O. Lange, Copenhagen, 1925. German translation by C. Schmidt, 2nd edn., Leipzig, 1925; English translation by Mead, London, 1921, and by G. Horner, 1924.

<sup>51</sup> Hippolytus, *Philosophumena*, VI, xxxvii, 7.

<sup>52</sup> *Apol.*, I, viii and lx.

<sup>53</sup> Athenagoras, *Legatio pro christianis*, xxiii.

I see all beings suspended from the spirit,  
 and I conceive them all as led by the spirit,  
 the flesh suspended from the soul,  
 the soul led out of the air,  
 the air suspended from the ether,  
 the fruits germinating from the abyss,  
 the child germinating in the maternal womb.

Hippolytus continues: "He understands all this in the following way: The flesh, for them, is matter, which is suspended from the soul, the demiurge. The soul is led out of the air: that is to say, out of the spirit, which is outside the *Pleroma*. The air is led out of the ether, that is, the external *Sophia* is led out of the *Sophia* inside the *Horos* and the whole *Pleroma*. From the abyss fruits germinate: that is the whole generation of *Æons* coming from the Father."<sup>54</sup>

The interpretation given by Hippolytus is a likely one. Whatever may be its meaning, the very existence of the psalm is interesting, confirmed as it is by Tertullian, and by the *Muratorian Fragment*, which mentions some Valentinian psalms.<sup>55</sup>

On this question of religious knowledge and its origin, we have also a testimony of Clement:

Valentine, the head of those who represent (religious revelation) as common to all, says textually in the homily on friends: "Many things that are written in the public Bibles are written in the Church of God, for common things are the words which come from the heart, the law written in the heart; here are the people of the Well-Beloved, loved by Him and loving Him." For he calls "public Bibles" either the Jewish Scriptures, or those of the philosophers, and he regards truth as common to all.<sup>56</sup>

In this way the privileged position of Judaism and Christianity is effaced. Revelation is always the source of religious truth, but revelation is not necessarily something which comes to mankind through the indispensable medium of Christ and the Church. On the contrary, it is immediately granted to certain individuals. The

<sup>54</sup> On this psalm, cf. D'Alès, *Hippolyte*, p. 97: "Among the productions attributed to the heretics, there is one which no one will venture to regard as invented at will: the Naassenian psalm has an authentic note no less certain than the unintelligible Valentinian psalm." Hippolytus's interpretation is adopted by Liechtenhahn, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

<sup>55</sup> Tertullian, *De carne Christi*, xvii; *Muratorianum*, lxxxii.

<sup>56</sup> *Strom.*, VI, vi, 52, 3-4. Cf. Zahn, *Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons*, Vol. II, pp. 953 *et seq.*

human grace is divided into three groups, the pneumatical, the psychical, and the hylical.<sup>57</sup> The last-mentioned are condemned to be the slaves of matter; the second can laboriously achieve their salvation through asceticism; the first-mentioned are the elect, who possess a divine germ deposited in them without the knowledge even of the demiurge and his angels; they are saved through gnosis, which comes from a divine illumination.

This idea of a divine race will dominate all Gnosticism. It presents a real attraction for proud minds, but for the disciples of the Gospel it will constitute one of its most obviously anti-Christian features.

### *Ptolemy*

Of the disciples of Valentine, there are two who are particularly well known, Ptolemy and Heracleon. A study of these is interesting, inasmuch as it puts us in presence of Gnostic exegesis, which the fragments of the great teachers leave in obscurity.

The letter from Ptolemy to Flora is given in its entirety by St. Epiphanius.<sup>58</sup> Harnack has published it with great care in his *Transactions of the Berlin Academy* (1902), and in his introduction he stresses its interesting character.<sup>59</sup> It does not expound esoteric teaching, but leaves that in a distant background: it may be revealed to Flora if she shows herself to be worthy. What Ptolemy sets forth in his letter is an interpretation of the Pentateuch. He distinguishes between three different inspirations, and depending upon these sources, three elements of unequal value. Some laws were dictated directly by God, as for instance the Decalogue: these are sacred and immutable so that not one iota may be changed. Others emanated from Moses, as for instance the *lex talionis*; though generally good, these laws are imperfect, and mingled with evil elements. Others, lastly, came from the elders of the Jewish people; particularly the ritual laws concerning sacrifices, the sabbath, fasting, and azymes: these precepts have only a symbolical value. This links up Ptolemy with the exegesis we have met with in the letter of Barnabas, but the former endeavours to justify his distinctions by the teaching of Jesus as set forth in the synoptic

<sup>57</sup> Cf. De Faye, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-68.

<sup>58</sup> *Haereses*, XXXIII, iii-vii.

<sup>59</sup> It is given in Migne, P.G., Vol. VII, 1281-1292. Dufourcq has partly translated it in *Irenée*, p. 79 *et seq.* De Faye devotes a few pages to it (*op. cit.*, pp. 103-107).

gospels. Finally, he asks who was the God who partially inspired the Pentateuch: he regards him as, not the supreme God, nor the devil, but the demiurge who is intermediate between these two extreme principles, and is the just God. Here we have the Marcionite thesis.

Of Ptolemy we possess also an interpretation of the Prologue to St. John's Gospel, summarised by Irenæus.<sup>60</sup> This text is different in character from the letter to Flora. It contains an esoteric teaching: the Valentinian theogony is sought in the Gospel. Ptolemy discovers it there by giving to the theological terms used by St. John the meaning attributed to them by the Gnostics. Some fragments of this long passage will suffice to illustrate the method:

. . . That which was made in him, it says, is life. Here he signifies a syzygy, for he says that all things were made *by* Him, but Life *in* him. Life, therefore, which is in Him, is more closely united to Him than all the beings made by Him, for it is with Him, and it is fruitful by Him. And as he adds: "And the Life was the light of men," he names particularly Man, and signifies with him the Church, to show that by the use of the one word he means the unity of syzygy. For from the Logos and Life are born Man and the Church. . . . Thus, by these words, John clearly teaches, amongst other things, the second Tetrad. But he has also set forth the first Tetrad. For, when speaking of the Saviour, and saying that all that is outside the Pleroma was fashioned by him, he says that he is the fruit of all the Pleroma. . . . And the Logos was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us, and we have seen his glory, glory as that which an only Son (receives) from the Father, full of Grace and Truth. Thus he expressly teaches the first Tetrad, by naming the Father, Grace, the Only-begotten, and Truth. Thus John speaks of the first Ogdoad, the mother of all the Æons: for he has named the Father, Grace, the Only-begotten, Truth, Logos, Life, Man, and the Church.

Thus we see how a few words, scattered in the text of St. John, are artificially collected together, and constructed into the whole Valentinian system—an easy form of exegesis, but a very weak one.

### *Heracleon*

We find the same in Heracleon. Like Ptolemy, he was a disciple of Valentine and belonged to the same generation. He interpreted

<sup>60</sup> *Adversus haereses*, I, viii, 5. Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 112-113. De Faye, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

the Gospels, and Clement gives a fragment of his on St. Luke.<sup>61</sup> Origen often quotes in his writings on St. John the commentary by Heracleon and discusses it. Though these numerous and lengthy transcriptions do not enable us to reconstitute the lost book completely, they nevertheless enable us to understand and judge its exegetical method.<sup>62</sup>

The letter from Ptolemy to Flora distinguished three principles, the supreme God, the Devil, and the Demiurge between these two. Heracleon seeks for the same theological scheme in the texts of St. John, and for instance in the story of the Samaritan woman. The supreme God, the Father, is symbolised by God the Spirit whom one must adore in spirit and in truth (fr. 20 *et seq.*); the God of the Jews, adored at Jerusalem, is the Demiurge; the one adored on the mountain of Samaria is the Devil.

The Demiurge plays a great part in this exegesis. John the Baptist humbling himself before Jesus is a symbol of the Demiurge, and the shoe of Christ is the world (fr. 8). The Demiurge again is seen in the ruler of Capharnaum (*John* iv, 46): he is but a ruler for his domain is small and ephemeral; he asks the Lord to heal his son, that is, the material world he has created; his servants are the angels; like him, they believe in the Lord, and this is the meaning of the text: "He believed, and all his household" (fr. 40). Again, the Demiurge is the one who carries out the judgments of Christ (*John* viii, 50; fr. 48), and St Paul refers to him when he says: "He bears not the sword in vain" (*Romans* xiii, 4).

The Devil is, as we have said, represented by the mountain of Samaria (fr. 20). He was the one to whom worship was addressed before the Law, and the Gentiles still honour him to-day; he has passions, but no will (fr. 46), he is entirely false (fr. 47).

Just as there are three supreme principles and three worships, so there exist three races of men: the spirituals, the psychicals, and the materials. The spirituals were formed by the Logos (fr. 2);

<sup>61</sup> *Strom.*, IV, ix, 71-72 (on *Luke* xii, 11 *et seq.*), fragment 50 in Brooke's edition. In this fragment, Heracleon explains how the Christian must confess Christ throughout his life. Clement, after quoting this text, remarks that Heracleon speaks as we do; he criticises him only for not recognising the value of a confession which, although not prepared for in life, is aroused and affirmed in the presence of death. See on the same text the commentary of De Faye, *op. cit.*, pp. 78-79.

<sup>62</sup> The fragments have been collected and edited by A. E. Brooke, *Fragments of Heracleon*, Texts and Studies, 1, 4 (1891). They are studied by De Faye, *op. cit.*, pp. 79-102. Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 113-116.

they possess a spiritual seed;<sup>63</sup> they are consubstantial with God,<sup>64</sup> their nature is incorruptible (fr. 37). Before the coming of the Saviour they were ignorant, and without true worship; they have been saved by him (fr. 17 and 19). Faith is natural to them (fr. 24); they succour and save the psychicals, they are the "water springing up to life eternal" (fr. 17 and 27). At the last day they will apparently become the brides of the angels of the Lord; this is the wedding feast, symbolised by that at Cana.<sup>65</sup>

The psychicals, symbolised by the Jews (fr. 19), adore the angels (fr. 21). They are very numerous, whereas the spiritual élite are few.<sup>66</sup> They are involved in matter, but can be saved, though without entering into the Pleroma like the spirituals.<sup>67</sup> Their symbol is the figure 7, between 6, the symbol of evil, and 8, the symbol of the Ogdoad.<sup>68</sup> They can by their choice become sons of the Devil; the material ones are so by nature (fr. 46).

These examples, which could be multiplied,<sup>69</sup> show the exegetical method of the Gnostics. It may be said in their defence that such fantasies were the fashion in those days: the Stoics rediscovered all their physics in the Homeric poems; their exegesis was as free as that of Ptolemy and Heracleon. But the Catholics did not at all regard themselves as authorised to treat the Bible as the Stoics treated Homer. Origen indeed will apply allegory to the interpretation of the Old Testament, and even of the Gospel, but he will do so quite differently from the Gnostics: <sup>70</sup> the Hexapla shows with

<sup>63</sup> Fr. 16; cf. the note referring to *Excerpta Theodoti*, I; *Philos.*, VI, xxxiv; *Strom.*, IV, xiii.

<sup>64</sup> Fr. 24; cf. n. C, p. 106. We see here the Platonist teaching, rejected by Justin in his *Dialogue*, iv.

<sup>65</sup> Fr. 12, cf. *Excerpta*, lxiii; Irenæus, *Adversus haereses*, I, vii, 1.

<sup>66</sup> Fr. 37, cf. *Excerpta*, lvi.

<sup>67</sup> Fr. 13, 11. Cf. *Excerpta*, lviii.

<sup>68</sup> Fr. 40; cf. fr. 16: in the 46 years required for the building of the Temple (*John* ii, 20), Heracleon finds a whole mystery: the great King Solomon is a figure of the Saviour; the number 6 signifies matter; 40 is the symbol of the sovereign and transcendent Tetrad, whence proceeds the spiritual seed deposited in matter.

<sup>69</sup> One could find in the Gnostics refuted by Irenæus, especially in *Adversus haereses*, I, i, 3, numerous traits very similar to those we have noticed in the fragments of Ptolemy and Heracleon. Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, p. 116, n. 1.

<sup>70</sup> It cannot therefore be said with De Faye (*op. cit.*, p. 79): "The method of interpretation practised by Gnosticism is allegory, and from this point of view there is no difference between it and Origen."



what care he set out to establish the true text of the sacred books and their meaning. The allegorical sense which he tries to discover is based upon the literal sense, but usually does not destroy the latter, and the mysteries which allegory thus discovers are Christian mysteries, which the Bible reveals and the official tradition of the Church sets forth. The Gnostics, on the contrary, continued their imaginary constructions in full freedom, often influenced by pagan traditions and only afterwards going to the Bible in order to seek confirmation by artificial contacts which cannot be regarded seriously.

### *The Gnostic Schools*

We have so far considered only the masters of gnosis, but they were not the only ones. From the first, the sect split up into rival schools, each being free to dogmatise as it chose: "The Valentinians," remarked Tertullian, "have taken the same liberties as Valentine, the Marcionites the same as Marcion: they have all in their own way transformed the faith."<sup>71</sup> The Valentinian heresy thus split up into two branches. In the West, a school called by Hippolytus the Italian School,<sup>72</sup> spread not only in Italy, but also in southern Gaul. To this school belonged Ptolemy and Heracleon, and it is the one usually dealt with by Irenæus.<sup>73</sup> The oriental school, to which were attached Axionikos and Bardesanes,<sup>74</sup> flourished

<sup>71</sup> *De praescr. haeret.* xlii, 8. Cf. Irenæus, *Adversus haereses*, I, xi, 1: "Let us see how inconstant are their views, for there are two or three of them; they do not now agree on the same subject, but contradict each other in words and in things."

<sup>72</sup> *Philos.*, VI, xxxv, 6.

<sup>73</sup> Irenæus, *Adversus haereses*, I, xiii *et seq.* The doctrine Irenæus sets forth is that of the disciples of Ptolemy: I, *praef.* 2. But he sometimes attacks also the followers of oriental Gnosticism, such as Marcus.

<sup>74</sup> We do not deal here with Bardesanes, born at Edessa in 154, died in 222. We possess only his *Dialogue on Destiny*, written in Syriac by a disciple named Philip in the last years of the second and the first years of the third centuries. This book, edited by F. Nau (*Le Livre des lois du pays*, Paris, 1899) and in *Patr. Syr.*, I, 2 (1907), does not set forth the Gnostic theses usually attributed by writers on heresies to Bardesanes; it is a discussion concerning free will. The author tries to prove that human acts can arise from three principles, nature, destiny, and will. The author exaggerates the influence of the stars on the human will. Nau grants that he was mistaken on "the influence of the stars, the origin and composition and death of the human body, and finally on the body of Christ," but denies that he was himself a Gnostic in the usual sense of the term (*Patr. Syr.*, II, p. 535). Cf. F. Nau, *Une biographie inédite de Bardesane l'astrologue*, Paris, 1897; A. Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, Bonn, 1922, pp. 12-14. To Bar-

mainly in Egypt and Syria: we find in it also some magi, such as the Marcus attacked by Irenæus. The tricks of this charlatan do not call for a detailed study, but they show to what miserable practices this proud Gnosticism could descend.

## § 2. MARCIONISM<sup>1</sup>

### *Marcion*

Marcion, the most formidable opponent of the Church in the second century, belonged to the same generation as the great Gnostics, Basilides and Valentine, but he was older than these.<sup>2</sup> His talent was not that of a metaphysician nor of a prophet; he in no wise resembled a Valentine or a Montanus. He was a man of action, and a leader who succeeded in forming numerous churches, solidly constructed, and closely linked with one another, and he was able to attract a following of "companions in misery"<sup>3</sup> many of whom made confession of the Christian faith even by martyrdom. His Bible was a mutilated one, and his theology feeble and inconsistent. Yet the new sect which he founded with such vehement energy undertook to conquer the world, and presented a fierce resistance to the Church.

### *His Origin*

Marcion was born at Sinope. In that province of Pontus, Christians were numerous, and the churches were well organ-

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desanes has sometimes been attributed the *Hymn of the Soul*, but this ascription is not proved. A. A. Bevan (*The Hymn of the Soul*, Cambridge, 1897) regards it as highly probable (p. 6), but most historians have not followed him in this. Felix Haase (*Zur Bardesanischen Gnosis*, 1910) concludes (pp. 89-90) that Bardesanes was certainly a heretic, and was influenced by Gnosticism though not himself a strict Gnostic; his chief sources were astronomy and astrology; he is a witness to the great influence of Greek philosophy; some terms passed from his work into the language of Syrian theology. He has little importance for general history and the history of religions, but great importance for the history of civilisation.

<sup>1</sup> On Marcion, see: A. von Harnack, *Marcion, Das Evangelium vom fremden Gott*, Leipzig, 1924; *Neue Studien zu Marcion*, Leipzig, 1923; A. d'Alès, *Marcion, la réforme chrétienne au IIe siècle*, in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XIII, 1922, pp. 137-168. Cf. also *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 122-131.

<sup>2</sup> Clement, *Strom.*, VI, xvii, 106: "Marcion belonged to the same period as Basilides and Valentine, but he was already an old man when they were as yet young."

<sup>3</sup> That is what Marcion called his disciples: cf. Tertullian, *Adv. Marcion*, IV, ix and xxxvi.

ised.<sup>4</sup> According to Hippolytus, Marcion's father was a bishop, who excommunicated his son.<sup>5</sup> The young man had amassed riches in his trade of armourer, left Pontus, and went to Asia Minor. He there opposed St. Polycarp, who regarded him as "the first-born of Satan." When the aged Bishop of Smyrna went to Rome in 154, he profited by his stay and restored to the Church many of the disciples of Valentine and Marcion.<sup>6</sup>

### *His Defection*

Marcion had in fact gone to Rome. He presented himself there as a faithful Christian, as is shown by a written document which the Roman Church kept,<sup>7</sup> and "in the first ardour of his faith" he gave to the Roman Church 200,000 sesterii.<sup>8</sup> He apparently kept in the background, working out his doctrine and endeavouring to secure its basis by preparing his *Antitheses* and his version of Scripture.<sup>9</sup>

When this work of elaboration was completed, Marcion appeared before the presbyters, and asked them for an explanation of some Gospel texts which he regarded as particularly significant: "A good tree can bring forth only good fruit" (*Luke* vi, 43); "No man

<sup>4</sup> Cf. the letter from Pliny to Trajan (Vol. II, p. 315). We recall also what Pliny said about the Christian deaconesses (*ibid.*, p. 404).

<sup>5</sup> This incident is mentioned in the *Syntagma* of Hippolytus, from whom Epiphanius copies it. The excommunication is said to have been caused by the violation of a virgin. The accusation seems to have been unknown to Tertullian, and accordingly seems hardly likely. But the excommunication may have been pronounced because of some heretical teaching, and possibly that is the "violation" mentioned by Hippolytus. Cf. Harnack, *Marcion*, pp. 23-24.

<sup>6</sup> Irenæus, *Adversus haereses*, III, iii, 4, quoted by Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, IV, xiv, 6. Cf. *ibid.*, 7: "The same Polycarp, to whom Marcion had said: 'Recognise me,' replied 'I recognise the first-born of Satan.'" This meeting may have been in Asia or in Rome. Marcion's stay in Asia is attested by Papias in the prologue *In evang. Johannis*, ed. Wordsworth-White, *Testamentum domini Jesu Christi latine*, Part I, fasc. iv, pp. 490 *et seq.*; Harnack, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

<sup>7</sup> Tertullian, *De carne Christi*, ii: "eo magis mortuus es, quo magis non es christianus; qui cum fuisses, excidisti, rescindendo quod retro credidisti; sicut et ipse confiteris in quadam epistola, et tui non negant, et nostri probant." Cf. *De praescr. haeret.*, xxx; *Adversus Marcionem*, I, xx; Kattenbusch, *Apost. Symbol.*, II, pp. 86 *et seq.*, pp. 322 *et seq.*; Harnack, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

<sup>8</sup> *Adv. Marc.*, IV, iv; *De praescr. haeret.* xxx.

<sup>9</sup> Harnack (*op. cit.*, p. 26) notes that the preparation of the expurgated text of the Bible and of the *Antitheses* must have required reflection and taken time, and as the text which served as a basis for these works is attested more in the West than in the East, we may reasonably infer that the work was done at Rome, during the few years preceding the rupture with the Church (144).

puts new wine into old bottles" (*ibid.*, v, 36). The interpretation given him did not satisfy him; he fell away, and the Roman Church rejected the money he had given, together with the giver.<sup>10</sup>

This rupture was the starting point of a new era according to the Marcionites: Christ appeared on earth in the fifteenth year of Tiberius; after 115 years and six and a half months, Marcion founded his church.<sup>11</sup> If we date the 15th year of Tiberius as 29, and begin with the commencement of that year, the Marcionite chronology leads to the middle of July 144.

The growth of the new sect was very rapid. About 150 Justin already wrote: "Marcion of Pontus, who is still teaching to-day, professes belief in a God superior to the Creator; with the help of demons he is sowing blasphemy throughout the world." And a little later on: "Many accept his teaching, and mock at us. They cannot prove anything they say, but are as stupid as sheep carried away by a wolf, and are the prey of atheism and of demons."<sup>12</sup> At the beginning of the following century, Tertullian will write: "The teaching of Marcion has filled the whole world."<sup>13</sup>

### *Opposition Between the Two Testaments*

This very rapid success will be better understood if we remember the uneasiness with which some imprudent or badly instructed Christians regarded some parts of the Old Testament, and especially its legislation. The author of the *Letter of Barnabas* wished to regard these laws merely as symbols of spiritual realities: God had never meant to ask the Jews for a temple of stone, nor for the circumcision of the flesh, nor for the sabbath rest.<sup>14</sup> Shortly afterwards,

<sup>10</sup> Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.*, IV, iv.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 19: "Anno XV. Tiberii Christus Jesus de caelo manare dignatus est, spiritus salutaris Marcionis. Salutis + qui ita voluit quoto quidem anno Antonini majoris de Ponto suo exhalaverit aura canicularis, non curavi investigare. De quo tamen constat, Antoninus haereticus est, sub Pio impius. A Tiberio autem constat usque ad Antoninum anni fere CXV et dimidium anni cum dimidio mensis. Tantumdem temporis ponunt inter Christum et Marcionem." Cf. Harnack, *Chronologie*, Vol. I, pp. 297 *et seq.*, 306 *et seq.*; Marcion, p. 18.

<sup>12</sup> *Apol.*, I, xxvi and lviii.

<sup>13</sup> Tertullian, *Ad. Marc.*, V, xix. The date of Marcion's death is not known to us, but it would seem not to be later than 160 (Harnack, *Marcion*, p. 25). According to Tertullian (*De praescr. haeret.*, xxx) he wished to be reconciled with the Church; he was told to bring back those he had led astray, but died before he was able to do so.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Bk. II, p. 441.

the same solution will be adopted in the letter from Ptolemy to Flora.<sup>15</sup> But it must have been clear to any unprejudiced mind that this interpretation did violence to the Bible.

Marcion rejected it: no more symbols, only the letter. But he regarded the letter as unworthy of God. The God of the Jews, the Creator, is not the God of Christians, nor the Father of Christ. Such is the fundamental doctrine of Marcionism, and it forms the chief subject of controversy.

To make clear the opposition which he believed to exist between the two Testaments, Marcion composed his book of *Antitheses*. This work, the only one which he wrote,<sup>16</sup> was for his disciples a supreme rule of faith.<sup>17</sup> It consisted essentially of texts of the Old and New Testaments, set against each other in order to bring out the opposition between the two Testaments, and consequently also between their deities. The Catholic doctors were in the habit of constituting collections of biblical texts or "testimonies," and giving these to their disciples to help them to know, defend and spread their faith.<sup>18</sup> Marcion similarly wished to have his collection of testimonies, but to manifest the opposition between the Law and the Gospel, not their agreement.<sup>19</sup>

The book is lost, but its detailed refutation by Tertullian and the other controversialists enables us to see how Marcion dealt with the two Testaments.<sup>20</sup>

Marcion read in *Isaias* (xlv, 7): "I send evils." Now, as Christ

<sup>15</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 638.

<sup>16</sup> We deal later with his text of the New Testament; this was not a book of his own composition, but a mutilated edition of the Gospel and of St. Paul.

<sup>17</sup> Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.*, I, xix: "Separatio legis et evangelii proprium et principale opus est Marcionis, nec poterunt negare discipuli ejus, quod in summo instrumento habent, quo denique initiantur et indurantur in hanc haeresim. Nam hae sunt Antitheses Marcionis, id est contrariae oppositiones, quae conantur discordiam evangelii cum lege committere, ut ex diversitate sententiarum utriusque instrumenti diversitatem quoque argumententur deorum." We see from this text that for the Marcionites the *Antitheses* were the supreme authority, *summum instrumentum* (cf. the expression *utriusque instrumenti* applied to the two Testaments); they employed it in the baptismal initiation just as the Church uses the Creed. Cf. Harnack, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

<sup>18</sup> The best known of these collections is the book of St. Cyprian, *Testimonia*, but this was not the first.

<sup>19</sup> These texts were not merely translated, but were accompanied by short explanations in which Marcion set forth and defended his ideas. Cf. Harnack, *op. cit.*, pp. 72 *et seq.*

<sup>20</sup> This work of reconstitution has been carried out very carefully by Harnack, *op. cit.*, pp. 68-134; the above-mentioned features are for the most part copied from him.

has told us, a good tree can bring forth only good fruit. If then the Creator is the evil tree which brings forth evil fruit, we must admit that there is another God, the good tree bringing forth good fruit.<sup>21</sup> In point of fact, in all the Old Testament we find a God who is not the one of the Gospel. To the precept of the Law, "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," the Gospel opposes: "if one strike thee on thy right cheek, turn to him also the other."<sup>22</sup> Elias brought down fire from heaven on the soldiers who were sent to take him; Christ forbids his apostles to act in that manner.<sup>23</sup> Eliseus sent bears against the children who mocked him; Christ says: "Suffer little children to come to me."<sup>24</sup> Moses extended his hands on the mountain so that Israel might exterminate its enemies; Christ extended his hands on the Cross to save sinners.<sup>25</sup> Josue stopped the sun so that carnage might continue; the Saviour said: "Let not the sun go down on thy wrath."<sup>26</sup>

### *The God of the Old Testament*

In these short and crisp sentences we find the argumentation of the man who had one day come forth from his obscurity to ask the presbyters: "A good tree can bring forth only good fruit: explain that to me," and who, insisting on a strict literalism, was quite ready to criticise the just God and his prophets.

To begin with the Fall: how was it that God, if He was good and omniscient and almighty, did not know how to prevent the sin of Adam?

Why did He permit that man, who was his image and likeness, or rather his own substance by the nature of his soul, should be circumvented by the devil, disobey his law, and incur death? If He were good, He would not have consented to such a misfortune; being omniscient, He ought to have known it in advance; being almighty, He could have prevented it; and so this catastrophe would never have happened, for these three attributes of the Divine majesty would not have allowed it. If indeed it came about, it is clear that that God cannot be regarded as good, omniscient, and almighty.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.*, I, ii; cf. II, xxiv.

<sup>22</sup> Tertullian, *ibid.*, II, xviii; cf. IV, vi; Adamantius, I, xv.

<sup>23</sup> Tertullian, *ibid.*, IV, xxiii.

<sup>24</sup> Tertullian, *ibid.*; Adamantius, I, xvi.

<sup>25</sup> Adamantius, I, xi.

<sup>26</sup> Adamantius, I, xiii.

<sup>27</sup> Text quote! by Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.*, II, v.

Marcion passes on to Jewish history, and continues his criticism. This God, he says, is inconstant: he prescribed the sabbath rest, and yet ordered the Ark to be carried around Jericho for eight successive days.<sup>28</sup> He forbade idolatry, and yet He ordered representations of the brazen serpent, the cherubim and seraphim.<sup>29</sup> He said he did not require sacrifices, and yet He took pleasure in the sacrifices of Abel and Noe.<sup>29</sup> He chose Saul, and repented of it.<sup>30</sup> He rejected Solomon.<sup>31</sup> He threatened the Ninevites with a punishment He did not inflict.<sup>32</sup> He was ignorant, for He asked Adam where he was, and he had to descend towards Sodom and Gomorrah in order to find out what was taking place there.<sup>33</sup> He was cruel, for Moses had to beseech him to forgive and to repress his anger.<sup>34</sup> He was partial and despotic: He hardened Pharaoh's heart, pillaged the Egyptians, and exterminated the Chanaanites: "Josue conquered the holy land, imposing on it an imperious and cruel domination; Christ forbids all domination, and preaches mercy and peace."<sup>35</sup>

Marcion invokes not only Jewish history but also the whole creation against its author. He is the god of locusts and of scorpions;<sup>36</sup> the body especially is full of miseries and of shame in its natural functions and in the work of generation: "marriage is an evil and indecent thing."<sup>37</sup> And Tertullian presents these heretics as "declaiming, with all the bitterness they can, about the filth attached to birth and infancy, and the unworthiness of the flesh."<sup>38</sup>

Such oratorical developments were easy, and were bound to produce an impression on Marcion's disciples. But if this passionate outburst was enough to disturb men's minds, it was nevertheless not sufficient to act as a basis for a doctrine. Its opponents could make an easy reply: If one must take literally all Marcion's invectives, why stop half-way, and regard the god of the Jews as a just

<sup>28</sup> Tertullian, *ibid.*, II, xxi.

<sup>29</sup> Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.*, II, xxii.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, II, xxiii-xxiv.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, II, xxiii.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, II, xxiv.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, II, xxv.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, II, xxvi.

<sup>35</sup> Origen, *Hom. XII*, 1, in *Jes. Nave*. Cf. Harnack, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

<sup>36</sup> Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.*, I, xvii; IV, xxvi.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, I, xxix.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, IV, xxi.

god? And how read the Gospel, however mutilated, if to Christ be not attributed a real body?<sup>39</sup>

### *Marcion's Bible*

In order to give to this doctrine a Scriptural foundation, Marcion constructed a Bible. He rejected the Old Testament, and of the New he retained only the Gospel of St. Luke, excising its first two chapters and the features which did not agree with his theology, retaining also ten epistles of St. Paul, but rejecting the pastoral epistles and the Epistle to the Hebrews. In the ten retained, he excised all that he regarded as favouring Judaism, attributing these features to false apostles.<sup>40</sup>

This new Bible was the fruit, not of a critical study, but of a theological thesis.<sup>41</sup> Marcion was as indifferent to the science of exegesis as to metaphysical speculation. He was a man of action who regarded the Bible only as an *instrumentum* which he could utilise for his purpose. Thus prepared, he carried out the constitution of his doctrine and of his Church. He sets forth a dualism, which divides the whole world into two spheres: the visible and the invisible worlds. The invisible world is the work of the supreme God, who resides there in the third heaven, and knows the whole universe, but is known only by the invisible world. The visible world was created by the Demiurge, who is its master, and thinks himself to be the sole master.<sup>42</sup> Accordingly we read his protestations in the Old Testament, which is wholly inspired by this Demiurge: "I am the only God, and above me there is no other." We already notice that this dualism does not presume an opposition between the two gods, but only a distinction of person and nature, a division of domains, and, in the lower God, a complete ignorance of the sovereign Deity.

This inferior God is not the god of evil. He is a despot who has placed man in this miserable material world created by him, and has,

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, II, xi; IV, xxi.

<sup>40</sup> On the modifications made in the text of St. Paul, cf. Harnack, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-48; in St. Luke, *ibid.*, pp. 48-57. On the motive underlying these alterations, cf. *ibid.*, pp. 60-61.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Harnack, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.*, I, xvi: "As neither the other world nor its God are seen, it follows that they distribute the two kinds of beings, visible and invisible, between the two creating gods, and reserve for their god the invisible world."



by breathing on him, given him a soul which comes from his own substance. This imperfect and weak substance was mingled with matter, and soiled by its contact. Yet the Demiurge was jealous of this imperfect creature: he refused him the knowledge of good and evil, and expelled him from the earthly paradise.<sup>43</sup>

There follows the lamentable history of this fallen race, enslaved to a despotic governor. The Jewish people, more evil than any other, became the people of the Demiurge, who for their sakes afflicted and exterminated the rival peoples. The Jews received from him a Law which doubtless contains virtuous precepts, but their virtue is of a narrow and mean kind. The rites prescribed, such as the rite of circumcision, are an image of the creation, and manifest the same defects: foolishness, weakness, and sometimes shamefulness. The prophets were merely the messengers of the Demiurge; they all, and John the Baptist, who closed the series, were completely ignorant of God.

### *The Coming of the Saviour*

The supreme God, the "Strange God" who owed nothing to the miserable human race, willed to save it. "In the fifteenth year of Tiberius Cæsar, in the time of Pontius Pilate, Jesus descended from heaven at Capharnaum, a town in Galilee, and taught there in the synagogue"<sup>44</sup>—such is the commencement of Marcion's Gospel.

The Demiurge had promised the coming of a Messias, through his prophets. He was to be a man of the race of David, anointed with the Spirit of the Demiurge: he has not yet come. But the good God has sent his Son, who is distinct from Him only in name: "Our God, according to the Marcionites, did not reveal himself at the beginning, nor by the creation, but has done so by himself in Christ Jesus."<sup>45</sup>

Passing through the heaven of the Demiurge, Jesus appeared here below. He could not take a material body, for matter is essentially evil, but only the similitude or appearance of a body. Hence there was no Nativity, childhood, or baptism, but a sudden appearance in the synagogue of Capharnaum.

Christ preached and performed miracles, but did not formally

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Harnack, *op. cit.*, pp. 146 *et seq.*

<sup>44</sup> Harnack, *op. cit.*, p. 165.

<sup>45</sup> Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.*, I, ii, xix. Cf. Harnack, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

oppose the Demiurge or announce the distinction between the two gods. He was surrounded by disciples of the Demiurge, who praised their God because of the miracles of Jesus. Jesus allowed this. Peter recognised him as the Messiah—evidently, the Messiah of the Demiurge; Jesus imposed silence on him, in order to prevent the spread of a lie.<sup>46</sup>

The "edict of Christ" consists of the beatitudes, which exalt the poor and curse the rich. Leaving aside all the texts of the Old Testament in which God promises good things to the poor,<sup>47</sup> Marcion sees in this preaching of Jesus the opposite of the preaching of the Demiurge. Those who are now pronounced blessed are those who were the pariahs of the old Law, the unfortunate and sinners.<sup>48</sup>

### *Redemption*

By his preaching and his miracles, Jesus shows that he was more powerful than the Demiurge. But he did not will to seize his dominion by force; instead he redeemed mankind by his death.<sup>49</sup> After death he descended into hell, to deliver all those whom the Demiurge had condemned:

Marcion says that Cain and his like, and the Sodomites and Egyptians and their like, and all the pagans who have lived in all kinds of wickedness, have been saved by the Lord. When He descended into hell they came before him, and He took them into his kingdom. But Abel and Enoch and Noe, and the other just men and the patriarchs of the time of Abraham, and all the prophets, and all those who have pleased God, have not been saved. For he says that they knew that their God had always tempted them, and thought he was tempting them still on that occasion. Hence they did not come before Jesus, and did not believe in his message. And because of that their souls remain in hell.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Tertullian, *ibid.*, IV, xviii and xxi.

<sup>47</sup> Tertullian, *ibid.*, IV, xiv.

<sup>48</sup> Tertullian, *ibid.*, IV, xi: "He brings forward as an argument the choice of a publican by the Lord, for it is the choice, by an opponent of the Law, of a man who was a stranger to the Law and to Judaism."

<sup>49</sup> This redemption had a decisive importance for Marcion; he regarded it as a proof that mankind belonged to someone other than the sovereign God, and that the death of Jesus was required in order to set men free. He finds this redemption not only in *Gal.* iii, 13, but in *Gal.* ii, 20, where he reads "he who redeemed me" instead of "he who loved me" (Harnack, *op. cit.*, p. 171).

<sup>50</sup> Irenæus, *Adversus haereses*, I, xxviii, 3, Harnack writes (*op. cit.*, p. 169): "We must stop at this point, for it is the one which the Fathers of the Church regarded as the height of the blaspheming wickedness of Marcion, and still shocks

The apostles of Christ did not maintain the Gospel in all its depth and purity: they preached the Demiurge. The Saviour raised up St. Paul in order to renew and carry out his work. At the Council of Jerusalem, the apostles came near to Him, but they allowed themselves again to stray from Him, and Paul alone preached the Gospel, the essence of which is salvation by faith, for it is enough to believe and to love.<sup>51</sup>

### *The Marcionite Church*

But only an élite can remain on these heights, as Marcion is aware: "The Demiurge is with the crowd, the Saviour with the sole elect."<sup>52</sup> When he descended into hell, Jesus took from thence all men in order to save them, except the just of the Old Testament. But on earth, the virtue of his death and the preaching of his Gospel are able to save only a few chosen ones, and thus, in consequence of his incarnation, the condition of man appears to be worse and salvation more rare.<sup>53</sup>

This contradiction offends reason, but the violent passion which carried away Marcion and his disciples led them to ignore this. They delighted in the spectacle of the strange God descending unexpectedly into this miserable world which did not know Him, and to which He owed nothing; they marvelled also at the laborious existence of the "companions of misery," who, upheld solely by faith and love, pass through this evil world, persecuted by the jealousy of the Demiurge, but faithful to their unknown God. And like the other Gnostics, they are easily consoled about the smallness of their numbers: are they not the élite?

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us to-day. Yet it all agrees with Marcion's principles." That is correct, but we recall the evangelical text dear to Marcion: "A good tree brings forth only good fruit."

<sup>51</sup> Tertullian here presses Marcion (I, xxvii): The Marcionites do not hold that the good God should be feared. But then how is pleasure to be resisted? And how is persecution to be endured? Is life to be purchased by apostasy? *Absit, absit!* replies Marcion. Harnack adds (*op. cit.*, p. 175): "This *absit, absit*, is a religious document of the first order." On Harnack's admiration of Marcion, cf. *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XV, 1925, pp. 361-362.

<sup>52</sup> Clement, *Strom.*, III, x, 69. Cf. Harnack, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

<sup>53</sup> Harnack (*op. cit.*, p. 173, n. 1) tries to lessen this contradiction by pointing out that the end of the world was at that time expected soon, and that in consequence that evil state of things was only to last for a little while.

Marcion imposed upon his disciples a severe asceticism;<sup>54</sup> he organised them into churches which quickly multiplied and lasted for a long time. At the end of the second century Marcionism had penetrated everywhere, and in all the provinces it threatened the Church. It was combated by Dionysius at Corinth, Irenæus at Lyons, Theophilus at Antioch, Philip of Gortyna in Crete, Tertullian at Carthage, Hippolytus and Rhodon in Rome, and Bardesanes at Edessa. In the fourth century Epiphanius writes:<sup>55</sup> "This heresy is still widespread in Rome and Italy, in Egypt and in Palestine, in Arabia and in Syria, in Cyprus and in the Thebaid, and even in Persia and other places."<sup>56</sup> Even in the fifth century, about 445, the Armenian Eznik combats it, not as an extinct heresy but as still a fearful plague.<sup>57</sup> But from the third century Manichæism will gather recruits from the Marcionite communities and assimilate them to itself, first in the West, and then in the East.

### *Its Inconsistent Theology*

This rapid and lasting diffusion of Marcionism was due to the impetuous spirit which its founder had impressed upon it. But this sentimental urge could not be of much assistance to its theology, which remained hesitating. The lofty construction of Marcion was a building erected in haste, which its new occupants had constantly to re-erect according to new plans. From the second century disagreement was evident: certain Marcionites remained attached to the teaching of the Master, and recognised two divine principles. Such were Potitus and Basilicus, mentioned by Rhodon, the head of the Roman School after Tatian.<sup>58</sup> At the same date, Apelles allowed only one principle;<sup>59</sup> others distinguish three, as for in-

<sup>54</sup> Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.*, I, xiv, xxviii: Tertullian criticises this as illogical: "Why impose on flesh so weak or so unworthy so heavy or so glorious a load of sanctity?" Cf. I, xxix; IV, xi, xvii, xxix, xxxiv, xxxviii; V, vii, viii, xv, xviii; *De praescr.*, x, xxx; Hippolytus, *Philos.*, VII, xxix; Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte*, Vol. I, p. 303, n. 1.

<sup>55</sup> *Haereses*, XLII, 1.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Harnack, *Ausbreitung*, pp. 931-932; *Marcion*, pp. 153-160.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. L. Mariès, *Le De Deo d'Eznik de Kolb*, Paris, 1924, especially pp. 59 *et seq.*

<sup>58</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, V, xiii, 3-4.

<sup>59</sup> Rhodon, *ibid.*, 5-7: "The aged Apelles, whom we met, was convicted of saying many queer things. Thus, he said that there was no necessity to split hairs, but

stance Syneros, mentioned by Rhodon,<sup>60</sup> and Lucanus or Lucian, mentioned by Tertullian,<sup>61</sup> Prepon, mentioned by Hippolytus,<sup>62</sup> and Megathius, a real or fictitious personage who maintains in the dialogue of Adamantius *De recta fide* the distinction between three principles, while another Marcionite, Marcus, allows only two.<sup>63</sup> This three-principle Marcionism was attacked by Ephrem<sup>64</sup> and Eznik.<sup>65</sup> The Marcionites who thus distinguish three principles admit, in addition to God the Father of Christ and the God of the Jews, a third evil God, who is the God of the pagans. This idea, which became ever more general among the Marcionites,<sup>66</sup> displays the radical dualism which Marcion himself had endeavoured to avoid, but the blind impulse he had given to the movement was bound to lead to it in spite of his efforts. Soon the shadowy figure of the Demiurge, the God of the Jews, will fade out, leaving only two rival principles, the good God and the evil deity. This is the

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each one ought to remain as he believed. He affirmed that those who believe in the Crucified will be saved, provided only they are found with good works. He thought moreover that the most obscure question of all was, as we have said above, that concerning God. He said that there is only one principle, as we ourselves hold. . . . When I asked him: 'Whence you derive this thesis? And how can you say that there is only one principle? Explain this to me,' he replied that the prophecies constitute their own refutation, for they contain no truth; they are contradictory, untruthful, and opposed to each other. But as to why there is only one principle, he confessed that he did not know, but that he felt himself led to affirm it, that such was his impression. And when I adjured him to tell me the truth, he swore that in all sincerity he did not know why there is only one ungenerated God, but that he believed this to be so. I began to laugh, and reproached him to setting himself up as a master, when he was aware that he did not have the knowledge of what he taught." Harnack (*Marcion*, pp. 185-187) greatly admires these words of Apelles: this Marcionite, according to him, excels Kant and Schleiermacher: he has recognised that the essence of religion is hope in the Crucified; "this hope has separated him not only from science, but also from the monotheistic faith." And he concludes: "Apelles is, before Augustine, the only Christian theologian with whom we could agree to-day without requiring a laborious accommodation." Harnack's admiration is certainly excessive, but Apelles' admission is revealing: this warm and confused religion is indeed the religion of the times of the last Antonines and the Severi. Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 77 *et seq.*

<sup>60</sup> Rhodon, in Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.*, 4.

<sup>61</sup> *De resurrectione*, III. Cf. pseudo-Tertullian, vi; Epiphanius, *Haer.*, xliii.

<sup>62</sup> *Philos.*, VII, xxxi.

<sup>63</sup> *De recta in Deum fide*, I, ii.

<sup>64</sup> *Opera syr.*, Rome, 1740, Vol. II, p. 444.

<sup>65</sup> Trans. Schmid, Vienna, 1900, IV.

<sup>66</sup> This distinction between three principles was widespread among the Gnostic sects outside Marcionism, e.g. in Heracleon (cf. above, p. 637).

great antithesis of Manichæism, which will supplant all those of Marcion, which nevertheless prepared the way for it.<sup>67</sup>

### § 3. MONTANISM<sup>1</sup>

#### *Characteristics of Montanism*

Montanism differed greatly from the heresies we have just studied. Gnosticism was an invasion of foreign elements, especially hellenic and oriental, into Christianity; Marcionism was a repudiation of the whole of the Old Testament. Montanism was not like that: it aimed at holding only Christian doctrine, and this in its entirety. At first it was only a movement of religious enthusiasm, similar to revivals in Protestantism. It presented itself as an outpouring of the Spirit, and as the rule of the Paraclete foretold by Jesus in the Gospel of St. John. It promulgated no new doctrine, but it desired to group all Christians together, to separate them from the world, and prepare them for the kingdom of God which was imminent. Yet these aims did in fact constitute a new Gospel, and when faced by the opposition of the Church the Montanists were very soon led to form a church of their own, and what was at first only a group of prophets and enthusiasts degenerated into a sect.

#### *The Prophetic Charism*

If we wish to understand the rise of this movement, we must remember the part played by prophecy in the Church.<sup>2</sup> Without

<sup>67</sup> In the Marcionite theology, the contradictions concerning the number of divine principles are the most important, but not the only ones. Christology contains others. For Marcion, as we have said, Christ had only a phantom body. Apelles is opposed to his master on this point also: his Christ had a real body, which he took to heaven (cf. Tertullian, *De carne Christi*, vi and viii). For Marcion and the majority of his disciples, Christ is the revealer of the good God, and later on we find Marcionites approximating to the Sabellians (e.g. Eustathius, *apud* Socrates, *Hist. eccles.*, IV, xii; Sozomen, VI, xi, cf. Harnack, *Marcion*, p. 275\*). But we nevertheless also find Marcionites who teach that Christ was the son of the evil deity, afterwards abandoned for the good God (Epiphanius, XLII, xiv. Cf. Harnack, *op. cit.*, p. 287\*; cf. p. 207). These contradictions show that the ecclesiastical organisation which Marcion gave to his sect was powerless to secure its unity.

<sup>1</sup> On Montanism, see: P. de Labriolle, *La crise montaniste; Les sources de l'histoire du montanisme*, 2 vols., Paris, 1913.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. P. de Labriolle, *La crise montaniste*, pp. 112-123.

going back to the *Acts* and St. Paul, we notice in the *Didache* the important place occupied by the prophets at the end of the first century: "You shall take and give to the prophets all firstfruits of the produce of winepress and threshing floor, of oxen and of sheep, for they are your high priests."<sup>3</sup> Thirty or forty years later, Hermas at Rome will still give to prophets precedence over priests.<sup>4</sup> At the beginning of the second century, we note the prophetic charism in the great bishops and martyrs, Ignatius and Polycarp; others regarded as prophets were Quadratus and the daughters of Philip,<sup>5</sup> Melito of Sardis,<sup>6</sup> and Ammias of Philadelphia.<sup>7</sup> These were not isolated instances: St. Justin, in his argument with Trypho, brings forward the prophetic charisms existing in the Church, which prove that these spiritual gifts have been transferred from the Jews to the Christians.<sup>8</sup> About 180, St. Irenæus gives in turn a similar testimony: "We often hear about brethren in the Church who have prophetic charisms and who, by the power of the Holy Spirit, speak in all kinds of tongues, and who in order to be of use, manifest the secrets of men and interpret the mysteries of God."<sup>9</sup> These gifts were still more widespread in the confessors of the faith: it was one of their privileges to "converse familiarly with the Lord."<sup>10</sup>

These prophetic communications, very frequent in the passions of the martyrs, appear in the daily life of the Church as exceptional gifts, and those who possess them are privileged people. Nevertheless the Christian prophets form as it were a succession and a tradition. The Montanists tried to take advantage of this,<sup>11</sup> while their Catholic opponents, far from denying the existence of such a

<sup>3</sup> *Didache*, xiii; cf. xv.

<sup>4</sup> *Shepherd*, Vis., III, i, 8. In his Commandments, x, 12, Hermas describes a true prophet, and shows how he is distinguished from a false one. Cf. *ibid.* on false prophets.

<sup>5</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, III, xxxvii, 1.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, V, xxiv, 5.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, V, xvii, 2.

<sup>8</sup> *Dial.*, lxxxii.

<sup>9</sup> *Adv. haer.*, V, vi, 1; cf. II, xxxii, 4: ". . . others have the knowledge of future events and of prophetic visions and words"; I, xiii, 4; III, xi, 9; III, xxiv, 1; IV, xxvi, 5; IV, xxvii, 2.

<sup>10</sup> This expression is found in the *Acts of the Martyrs of Smyrna* (ii, 2), the *Martyrs of Lyons* (*Hist. eccles.*, V, i, 56), and of St. Perpetua (iv).

<sup>11</sup> P. de Labriolle (*op. cit.*, p. 123) rightly calls attention to this traditionalist feature of primitive Montanism: "What strikes us in all this primitive period of the sect is the marked traditionalist spirit which animated the followers of the prophets and the latter themselves."

tradition, argued from it against the disciples of the new prophets: "If, as they say, after Quadratus and Ammias of Philadelphia, the women around Montanus received the prophetic charism by way of succession, let them show who among the disciples of Montanus and his women have in fact inherited this gift from them. For the Apostle holds that the prophetic charism must exist in the Church until the final prophecy. But these have no one to show in the fourteen years since the death of Maximilla."<sup>12</sup>

### *Danger of False Prophets*

This belief in the diffusion of the prophetic spirit was not without its danger: some might claim gifts which in fact they did not possess, and, worse still, charlatans could deceive Christians by semblances of prophecies. The danger was so serious that in the *Didache* and the *Shepherd* of Hermas, the faithful are put on their guard against false prophets, and they are given signs whereby these are to be recognised.

The danger was still more evident in circles in which the Last Day was awaited. Hippolytus at the beginning of the third century mentions two recent incidents which enable us to understand the prophecies of Montanus and the enthusiasm they aroused:

A Syrian bishop persuaded several brethren to go out into the desert, to be ready for Christ, with their wives and children; they wandered in the mountains and along the roads. The governor nearly arrested them as brigands, but was prevented from doing so by his wife who was a Christian. In Pontus, another bishop, a pious and humble man but one who trusted too much in his visions, had three dreams. He began to prophesy: "this and that will come to pass." And lastly: "Know, my brethren, that the judgment will take place in a year's time, and if what I tell you does not come to pass, have no more faith in the Scriptures, but act as you will." Nothing happened, he was confounded, brethren were scandalised, virgins married, and those who had sold their lands were reduced to beggary.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Anonymous anti-Montanist writing, quoted by Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, V, xvii, 4.

<sup>13</sup> In *Daniel*, III, xviii-xix. In the middle of the third century, Firmilian gives an account of a recent prophetess in Cappadocia, who set out for Jerusalem with a crowd of followers. These excesses were particularly alarming in Phrygia: the orgiastic cultus of the Great Mother had prepared the way for Montanism. Cf. Graillet, *Le Culte de Cybèle*, 1912, p. 404.



### *Origin of Montanism*

The beginnings of Montanism are narrated in an anti-Montanist treatise addressed to Abercius<sup>14</sup> quoted at length by Eusebius.<sup>15</sup> When Gratus was proconsul of Asia,<sup>16</sup> a neophyte named Montanus, thought to be a Gallic convert,<sup>17</sup> began to prophesy. People in his village, Ardabau, on the borders of Mysia and Phrygia, were divided in their opinion of him. Very soon two women, Priscilla and Maximilla, began to prophesy like him, addressing those present in a way which caused a great impression. "The Spirit praised some, and these were overjoyed and swollen with foolish pride in consequence; the Spirit puffed them up by the greatnesses of his promises. But sometimes the Spirit rebuked them openly in a sharp and faithful way, so as to merit belief. But there were very few of the Phrygians who allowed themselves to be deceived."<sup>18</sup>

### *Montanist Prophecy*

When they encountered resistance, these new prophets stiffened their attitude: "The spirit of pride taught them to blaspheme the whole Catholic Church under heaven, because the pseudo-prophetic spirit was given neither honour nor admittance." They claimed to

<sup>14</sup> This Abercius was bishop of the famous inscription: Labriolle, *op. cit.*, pp. 581 *et seq.*

<sup>15</sup> On this anonymous work, cf. P. de Labriolle, *Les sources de l'histoire du montanisme*, pp. xx-xxix. The date of this work can be determined by the following indication (*Hist. eccles.*, V, xvi, 19): "It is now more than thirteen years since Maximilla died, and no war, either local or general, has taken place in the world. Indeed, through the mercy of God, the Christians themselves have enjoyed a permanent peace." These thirteen years of peace direct us to the reign of Commodus; the death of Maximilla must have been 179 or 180, and the anonymous work must have been written in 193. Cf. P. de Labriolle, *Histoire du montanisme*, pp. 580 *et seq.*

<sup>16</sup> We do not know the date of the proconsulate of Gratus (P. de Labriolle, *op. cit.*, p. 574); Epiphanius puts the commencement of Montanism in the 19th year of Antoninus the Pious (157) (*Haer.*, XLVIII, i), Eusebius in the 12th year of Marcus Aurelius (*Chronicle*, cf. Karst, *Eusebius Werke*, V, 1911, p. 222; P. de Labriolle, *op. cit.*, p. 570). This second date is the most probable one.

<sup>17</sup> St. Jerome (*Epist.*, XLI, iv) says he was a eunuch. On this letter, cf. *Sources*, pp. xcv *et seq.* In the *Dialexis* which P. de Labriolle (*ibid.*, p. cvi) attributes to Didymus, Montanus is set forth as "a priest of Apollo." P. de Labriolle (*ibid.*, p. xcvi) does not interpret this expression literally: "I think the name of Apollo is used here, not as a precise historic determination, but only to designate paganism in general." He thinks (*Histoire du montanisme*, p. 20) that Montanus had been a priest of Cybele. So also Graillot, *op. cit.*, p. 404.

<sup>18</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, V, xvi, 9.

be the prophets promised by Jesus,<sup>19</sup> and that it was God who spoke in them:

Oracle I: "It is I, the almighty Lord God who dwell in man."

II: "I am neither an angel nor a messenger, but I the Lord God, the Father, am come."

III: "I am the Father and the Son and the Paraclete."

Maximilla, Oracle XII: "I am chased away as a wolf from the sheep; but I am not a wolf: I am word, spirit and power."

XIII: "Listen not to me, but listen to Christ."

All this might be understood in the sense of their theory of inspiration,<sup>20</sup> but Montanus went farther. In the discourse after the Last Supper, Jesus had announced the coming of the Paraclete; these promises were now being realised. Montanus was the Paraclete, and the new revelation went beyond all the preceding ones, even those of Christ and the apostles.<sup>21</sup>

### *The Montanist Propaganda*

While the claims of the Montanists were growing, the sect itself was being organised. Disciples, rich and poor, brought their contributions to Montanus; a fund was opened, administered by a certain Theodotus; soon chosen agents were sent everywhere, paid

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 12: "They say they are the ones the Lord promised to send to his people" (cf. *Sources*, p. 73). Cf. Matt. xxvii, 34: "Behold I send to you prophets."

<sup>20</sup> Oracle V of Montanus: "Man is like a lyre, and I hover over him as a plectrum. The man sleeps, but I am awake. For it is the Lord who casts out the heart of men in order to give to men a new heart." Graillot (*op. cit.*, p. 404): "That is the way in which the worshippers of Attis identified themselves with their god."

<sup>21</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, V, xiv: "They had the impudence to claim that Montanus was the Paraclete, and the women who accompanied him, Priscilla and Maximilla, the prophetesses of the Paraclete." Hippolytus, *Philos.*, VIII, xix: "They claim that the Spirit, the Paraclete, has come upon them (Priscilla and Maximilla) and above these they also regarded as a prophet a certain Montanus. . . . They declare that they have learnt from them something more than the Law, the prophets and the gospels. They reverence these young women more than the apostles and any charism, and some of them go so far as to say that there is in them something more than was in Christ." Pseudo-Tertullian, VII: "They all repeat this blasphemy, that in the Apostles there was the Holy Spirit but not the Paraclete, and that the Paraclete has spoken through Montanus more than Christ spoke in the Gospel, and not only more but better and greater things." Didymus, *De Trinitate*, III, xli, 2: "As the apostle wrote: . . . 'when that which is perfect shall come, then that which was imperfect will be abolished,' they maintain that Montanus has come, and that he has the perfection of the Paraclete."

by Montanus. Among these are mentioned: "Alcibiades, one of the earliest of the faithful, Themison, the boon companion of Maximilla, and Alexander, upon whom the cruel attacks by the orthodox weighed so heavily; and later on, Miltiades, who held an important position, and by whose name the sect was sometimes designated."<sup>22</sup> This propaganda was supported by writings which were spread everywhere, and of which many traces are found: a collection of oracles and psalms, the Montanist reply to the work of Miltiades,<sup>23</sup> the "Catholic" letter of Themison, and possibly letters to the churches of Rome and Lyons.<sup>24</sup> The Catholics who opposed the Montanists criticised their impudent claims, their venality, and their worldly lives.<sup>25</sup>

As a result of this keen propaganda, Montanism spread with an astonishing rapidity. It appeared in Phrygia in 172; already in 177 the churches of Lyons and Rome were alarmed at the commotion caused, of which they felt the effects. In 179, apparently, Maximilla died, and the prophecies died down, but these seven years had enabled the sect to invade Asia: "It was not only the Phrygian local centres, Ardabau, Pepuza, Tymion, Cumane, and Otrous which were affected. More important cities, Apamea, Hierapolis, Hieropolis were threatened. As far as Syria to the south, Galatia to the east, Lydia to the west, and beyond the Sea of Propontis to Thrace, the spread of the plague caused very grave anxiety. The passing of the years did not weaken its virulence, for some twenty years at least after the first outburst Ancyra was at grips with it. Whole cities like Thyatira went over to the reformers, and very soon people spoke currently of the churches of the prophets, that is, of communities wholly won over to the Prophecy."<sup>26</sup>

### *Resistance of the Church in the East*

The bishops realised the danger. They might have been more tolerant towards a rigorous asceticism which was content to preach fasting and abstinence, forbid second marriages, and recommend

<sup>22</sup> P. de Labriolle, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

<sup>23</sup> There were two Miltiades involved in this matter, one being a Montanist, and the other an anti-Montanist. Cf. P. de Labriolle, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

<sup>24</sup> On these works, cf. P. de Labriolle, *op. cit.*, p. 145, n. 2, and the references there given to other parts of the same work.

<sup>25</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, V, xviii, 11, in which Apollonius is quoted.

<sup>26</sup> P. de Labriolle, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

chastity,<sup>27</sup> and even towards a Millenarianism like that of Justin and Irenæus which also made room for a less literal interpretation of the prophecies of the Apocalypse,<sup>28</sup> but they could not suffer a message which, calling itself prophetic, claimed to go beyond the Gospel and to reject the hierarchy. Synods were convoked, the first which history mentions, and the heresy was therein condemned.<sup>29</sup> These measures were certainly efficacious: the Montanists were regarded as excommunicated, and even persecution did not modify this severe attitude.<sup>30</sup> Closely linked together, the Asiatic bishops succeeded in arresting the disease and in expelling from the Church the adherents of the new prophecy: by the end of the second century they had won the day.<sup>31</sup>

### *In the West*

In the West, the danger was not so great, and there also it was promptly averted. In 177, the confessors of Lyons, who had been consulted, sent to Rome their opinion on Montanism. They adopted a moderate attitude, careful for the peace of the Church, but did their best to put the faithful on guard against the new prophecy;<sup>32</sup>

<sup>27</sup> This rigorism is displayed, for instance, in the correspondence between Pinytos, Bishop of Cnossos, in Crete, with Dionysius of Corinth (*Hist. eccles.*, II, xxiii, 7-8). Dionysius had exhorted Pinytos "not to impose on the brethren the heavy burden of chastity, but to bear in mind the weakness of the majority." Pinytos replies that he "receives with admiration what Dionysius has said to him, but he thinks he ought to give his people a more solid nourishment, in more perfect works, for fear that, being fed constantly on milk, they gradually lapse into childhood." Eusebius adds: "We can see in this reply the orthodoxy of Pinytos' faith, the care he had of the needs of his flock, and his understanding of divine things." Cf. P. de Labriolle, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

<sup>28</sup> On this Millenarianism, cf. *infra*, pp. 686-688.

<sup>29</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, V, xvi, 10. The history of these synods is given in some detail in the *Libellus synodicus* of Pappus, quoted by Hefele-Leclercq, *Histoire des conciles*, Vol. I, p. 128; but this ninth-century document has no authority; cf. P. de Labriolle, *op. cit.*, p. 30. Of greater importance is the letter of Serapion of Antioch (190-211), some portions of which are given by Eusebius (*Hist. eccles.*, V, xix). Cf. P. de Labriolle, *op. cit.*, pp. 152-155.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. the anonymous anti-Montanist writer (*Hist. eccles.*, V, xvi, 22): "When the faithful members of the Church are called to suffer martyrdom for the true faith, and find themselves with martyrs who belong to the Phrygian heresy, they keep apart from these and continue to the end without any contact with them, not wishing to give their consent to the spirit of Montanus and the women. The fact is well known, and has taken place in our own time, at Apamea on the Meander, among those who bore witness with Caius and Alexander of Eumeneia."

<sup>31</sup> Cf. P. de Labriolle, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

<sup>32</sup> Eusebius (*Hist. eccles.*, V, iii, 4) does not give us the text of this consultation, but he tells us that it was "pious and very orthodox." On this opinion, cf.

St. Irenæus, who was then their messenger, persevered in this same attitude.<sup>33</sup> At Rome, Montanism was condemned by Pope Zephyrinus about the year 200.<sup>34</sup> At Carthage the sect was to gain in Tertullian a valuable but somewhat independent convert: after he had seceded from the Church, we find him separating from the Montanists and founding a little group of Tertullianists.

We have already seen a like disunity in the Valentinians and the Marcionites. The tendency towards schism is found not only at Carthage but also in the East among the followers of the new prophecy. The "followers of Proclus" oppose the "followers of Eschinus": the former have only the errors common to all the Montanists; the latter identify the Father with the Son.<sup>35</sup> Soon Mani will imitate the claims of Montanus and say that he is the organ of the Paraclete; but that which in Phrygia was only an outburst of enthusiasm will become in Persia a dualistic heresy which will gravely threaten the Church.

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P. de Labriolle, *op. cit.*, pp. 219 *et seq.* The Acts of the Lyons martyrs display an ardent piety, and a great respect for heavenly visions and communications, but nothing here is Montanist. As for Alcibiades, he fasted on bread and water; was that a Montanist practice for him? Nothing proves that it was, and what is certain is that he abandoned this fasting on the advice of Attalus, himself enlightened by a vision. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 220-230.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 230-242.

<sup>34</sup> The indications given by Tertullian are difficult to interpret. Labriolle (*op. cit.*, p. 275) concludes: "It is between 198 and the very early years of the third century that we must put the intrigues of Praxeas, and they must have had Zephyrinus as their object."

<sup>35</sup> Pseudo-Tertullian, VII, and P. de Labriolle, *Sources*, p. 51, and *Histoire du Montanisme*, p. 275, n. 2; Bardy, *Didyme l'Aveugle*, pp. 237 *et seq.*

## THE CATHOLIC REACTION

§ I. ST. IRENÆUS<sup>1</sup>*The Struggle Against Heresy*

DURING the second half of the second century, the whole Church was in a great ferment. Gnosticism, which had hitherto enticed from the fold only a few of the sheep, now threatened the whole flock; bold and unstable minds were indulging in dangerous speculations; secret traditions were opposed to or preferred to the common teaching of the Church; the morality preached by the apostles and bishops was considered too timid, and some wished to go beyond it and adopt a morality for the élite; the disciples of Marcion rejected the Old Testament, its prophets and its God, reserving their adoration for a strange God who had suddenly revealed himself in a Christ unknown to the Church; and lastly from Phrygia came a new prophecy, which announced to its disciples a spiritual gospel, superior to that of Jesus.

In presence of this great danger, the Church drew closer round its leaders, and through them closer to the apostles, to Christ and to God. This Catholic reaction manifested itself in many ways, in ecclesiastical discipline, in theology, in liturgy and worship. We shall shortly describe this strong movement, but we must first study the personal work of the great bishop who in those troubled

<sup>1</sup> Bibliography.—Works: *Adversus haereses*, ed. Massuet, Paris, 1710, reproduced in Migne, P.G., Vol. VII; ed. by W. W. Harvey, Cambridge, 1857. The Armenian translation of Books IV and V was published by Erwand Ter-Minasiantz in *Texte und Untersuchungen*, Vol. XXXV, 2, Leipzig, 1910. *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*, published for the first time in an Armenian translation by Karapet Ter-Mekerttschian in *Texte und Untersuchungen*, Vol. XXXI, 2, Leipzig, 1907, and again in *Patrologia orientalis*, XII, 5, pp. 659-731, followed by a French translation by P. Barthoulot (pp. 747-802); this translation had first appeared in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. VI, 1916, pp. 361-432. Latin translation by S. Weber, Freiburg, 1917; English translation by J. Armitage Robinson, London, 1920.

Chief studies: Massuet, *Prolegomena*, in Migne, P.G., Vol. VII, 173-382; Freppel, *Saint Irenée*, Paris, 1861; A. Dufourcq, *Saint Irenée*, Paris, 1904; F. Vernet, article *Irenée*, in *Dict. de Théol. Cath.*, Vol. VII, 2, 1923, col. 2394-2533; Lebreton, *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 517-617.

times more than anyone else devoted himself to the task of repelling heresy.

### *Irenæus at Lyons*

We first find St. Irenæus at Lyons, in the terrible days of the persecution of 177. The church of Lyons, as yet small in numbers, suffered terribly: its bishop, St. Pothinus, died in prison at the age of 90 as a result of ill treatment; and more than forty Christians were martyred. Those who thus sacrificed their lives were the ones who seemed to be the indispensable supports of the Gallic Christians.<sup>2</sup>

### *His Embassy to Rome*

While awaiting death, the confessors did not cease to take an interest in the Church. Disturbed at the effects of the prophecy of Montanus, they sent various letters to the brethren of Asia and Phrygia, and also to Eleutherius, Bishop of Rome. "They desired, they said, to be ambassadors of peace between the churches" (Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, V, iii, 4). They requested Irenæus to go and see Eleutherius, sending with him this letter of recommendation:

We have requested our friend and the companion of our sufferings, Irenæus, to give you these letters, and we beg you to receive him well, as one who is zealous for the testament of Christ. If we thought that hierarchical rank would ensure justice, we would present him in the first place as a priest of the Church, for such he is (*Hist. eccles.*, V, iv, 2).

Thus the mission then given to Irenæus was to be an ambassador of peace. No other could have suited him better, and throughout his life he was to be a peacemaker, maintaining or re-establishing unity between the churches.

### *His Youth*

His previous history and formation had prepared him for this office. About 190, writing to a friend of his childhood, Florinus,

<sup>2</sup> Expression used by the Lyons confessors (Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, V, i, 13).

who had fallen into heresy, Irenæus thus reminded him of his youthful memories:

When you were still a child, I saw you with Polycarp; you were prominent at the imperial court, and endeavoured to gain his approbation. Indeed, I remember those times better than recent events. For the things I learnt when young became one with my soul and came to form part of it, so that I can say in what place the blessed Polycarp used to sit in order to speak, how he came in and went out, what was the character of his life, his physical appearance, the talks he had with people, how he told of his relations with John and with the others who had seen the Lord, how he reported their words and all that he had learnt from them concerning the Lord, His miracles and His teaching. All this Polycarp had gathered from those who had seen the Word of Life, and he related it all, in conformity with the Scriptures. I carefully listened to all these things then, by the grace of God given me; I have kept them in memory, not on paper but in my heart. By God's grace, I continue to recall them faithfully, and I can testify before God that if this blessed and apostolic presbyter had heard things such as these, he would have cried out and stopped his ears . . . and would have fled from the place where he had heard such words.<sup>3</sup>

This precious passage tells us about the youth of St. Irenæus;<sup>4</sup> and reveals to us not only the circumstances of his life, but still more his moral and religious character: Irenæus desired to be and was to be above all a witness of tradition.

This tradition, which he had learnt at Smyrna from Polycarp and the other presbyters, was found by Irenæus also in Rome. His sojourn with this church has not been explicitly mentioned by him, but there are several indications of it, such as his recollections of St. Justin, and his knowledge of the church of Rome and its traditions.<sup>5</sup> It was in all probability at Rome that Irenæus gathered information about the Gnostic heresy; it is hardly likely that he would have found such precise and detailed information at Lyons;

<sup>3</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, V, xx, 5-7.

<sup>4</sup> It enables us also to fix approximately the date of his birth. The martyrdom of St. Polycarp took place in 155, and so the birth of Irenæus must have been about 140 at the latest. Harnack (*Chronologie*, p. 333) thus concludes his own discussion on the date: "Irenæus was born a little before 142, perhaps between 135 and 142; the earliest limit, but an unlikely one, is 130." Zahn (*Realencyclopädie für protest. Theologie*, art. *Irenäus*, pp. 408-9, discusses the date at length and puts it earlier, about 115.

<sup>5</sup> To these we may add the account of the martyrdom of St. Polycarp, as it is found in the Moscow MS. (Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, Vol. II, 2, p. 985; Lelong, *S. Ignace*, p. 159); on its historic value, cf. Zahn, *op. cit.*, p. 409.



it was probably also at Rome that he familiarised himself with the Paschal tradition which differed from that of his church of Smyrna, and which nevertheless he adopted.<sup>6</sup>

### *His Works*

By sending him to Eleutherius as their ambassador, the confessors of Lyons saved him from the persecution and ensured his future glorious ministry. We shall study in another chapter his government of the church of Lyons and his missionary efforts in Gaul,<sup>7</sup> and so we need not do more than mention these here. At the same time we must point out that the episcopal office of the great bishop was throughout inseparable from his theological work. About this time Clement was teaching at Alexandria, and by lectures preparing the *Stromata* which he would soon collect together. Lyons was not Alexandria, and the missionary bishop had not the same leisure for study as the master of the Catechetical School. Irenæus writes in the Preface to his work: "We live among the Gauls, and in our dealings with them we often use barbarous language, and so you must not expect to find in our work either the art of words, which we have not learnt, or the power of style, or the art of pleasing, of which we are ignorant" (*Adversus haereses*, pref., 3). Later on, when speaking of the faith of the Church, he prefers to give the witness of the still barbarous Christian communities among Iberians and Celts, and in the East those of Egypt and Libya (*Ibid.*, I, x, 2). These have neither paper nor ink, but on their hearts the Spirit has engraved the message of salvation (*Ibid.*, III, iv, 2).

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Holmes, *History of the Christian Church in Gaul*, pp. 46-47: "Was Irenæus 'directus' to the city of Lyons by St. Polycarp? . . . Irenæus was at Rome, and not at Smyrna or Lyons when Polycarp suffered. Moreover, Irenæus was not a follower of Polycarp in the Paschal Question, but observed the rule which Anicetus and others had adopted. Not a word is said by Irenæus as to the mission at Lyons being due to the initiation of Polycarp, nor is there any reliable evidence that the Churches of Asia Minor ever attempted missions to Gaul. . . . We know nothing of the origin of Pothinus. He probably, as Irenæus certainly, came from Rome. That he bore a Greek name does not prove that he came from Asia Minor. . . . The appeal of the Christians of Lyons to Eleutherius, and the fact that Irenæus, when bishop of Lyons, regarded the permanence of orthodox tradition in the Church as depending on the continuity of the Roman episcopate, seem to prove that the mission to Lyons came at least through Rome, if indeed it did not emanate from Rome."

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *infra*, pp. 772-775.

The literary character of the works of Irenæus will bear the marks of the circumstances in which they were written, and of the urgent tasks which more than once interrupted the writer, but we also find in them the efforts of a missionary who, finding himself face to face with heresy, defended the neophytes he had won for Christ, and whom heresy threatened to entice away from him.

Irenæus wrote much.<sup>8</sup> Two of his works have come down to us: the *Exposition and Refutation of False Gnosis*, and the *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*. The former, often known by the title of the Latin translation *Adversus haereses*, is the more important. It consists of five books, composed at different times. In writing them the author had no prearranged plan, nor did he foresee the way in which they would develop. As we have said, Irenæus was not a speculative theologian who undertook to give to posterity an account and refutation of Gnosticism, but a bishop who had around him some souls disturbed by a pernicious propaganda which he set out to denounce and counteract.<sup>9</sup>

### *His Object*

The primary aim of Irenæus was to unmask Gnosticism and to bring its systems into the full light of day. He writes thus at the end of his first book:

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Vernet, *op. cit.*, cols. 2400-2410.

<sup>9</sup> The first two books form an apologetic unit, and were the first ones to be written; Book I contains an exposition of the Gnostic systems, and Book II their refutation. The third book contains the great theological theses on which the whole edifice rests: Scripture and Tradition. In the fourth book Irenæus devotes himself to establishing against Marcion the unity of the divine plan in the history of revelation and of salvation. In the fifth he deals with the last things and particularly with the resurrection; he shows that the flesh is not an essentially evil principle, as the Gnostics maintained, but that it is capable of redemption and salvation. The date of the third book is determined approximately by the reference (III, iii, 3) to the pontificate of Eleutherius (175 to 189); Book II seems to allude (xxii, 2) to a state of persecution, which applies better to the reign of Marcus Aurelius than to that of Commodus. But Book IV (xxx, 1) speaks of a Christian penetration into the imperial palace, which best fits the time of Commodus, when, through the favour of Marcia, Christians were given some positions in the Emperor's entourage. Thus the work as a whole would date about the year 180. Of the Greek original we possess now only fragments quoted by later writers, especially Hippolytus, Eusebius and Epiphanius. Quotations from the first book are very numerous; they are rarer in the case of the other books, but usually concern the most important passages. The Latin translation, which we possess in its entirety, is very faithful and very early; it was made before the time of St. Augustine, who quoted from it. Some critics date it in the fourth century; others think that it was made at Lyons in the time of St. Irenæus. Books IV and V have come down to us also in an Armenian translation, which gives us a useful instrument of control.

To reveal their systems is to conquer them. That is why we have endeavoured to bring to light the whole body of this evil and cunning little beast, and by means of yourselves to make it known to all. There will then be no need of much speech to destroy this doctrine, for it will be known to all. If a wild beast is hidden in a wood and attacks and ravages from thence, one who isolates the wood, lets the light into it, and reveals the animal itself lightens the task of those who want to capture it. . . . Similarly we ourselves, by publishing their secrets and hidden mysteries, render unnecessary long discourses with a view to destroying them. . . . We shall refute them all in the next book. . . . It is not enough for us to unmask the beast, but we must also attack it from all sides (I, xxxi, 4).<sup>10</sup>

The plan was destined to produce the desired result. The success of Irenæus is shown by subsequent quotations from his work: these are so numerous that by combining them we could reconstitute almost the whole of the first book. For us to-day it is perhaps not the most interesting of the five: it reveals less to us of Irenæus himself than of his opponents, and among these not so much of the leaders as of the disciples; if we wish to determine the sources of Gnosticism we have to go elsewhere. As we have said, the Bishop of Lyons was not inspired by scientific curiosity, but by concern for the salvation of his flock. Even so, we can only admire the great labours involved in his investigation: in no other writer of that time can we find so detailed a description of this group of systems.

### *The Gnostic Peril*

We have remarked that Irenæus's information must have been gathered by him for the most part during his stay in Rome. But he realised that the danger of the Gnostic plague was very close to him in Gaul, for it was already attacking these newly formed Christian communities.

<sup>10</sup> This passage should be supplemented by the explanations given in the Preface: "We judged it necessary to make use of the writings of the disciples of Valentine, to enter into relations with some of them, and to master their teaching in order to reveal to you these tremendous and profound mysteries, which cannot be understood by all because not all have sufficiently strong minds. Study to know them in order to reveal them to those who are with you." He returns to this important point in the Preface to Book IV, 2: "Those who were before us and were much better than we are did not succeed in refuting the disciples of Valentine because they were ignorant of their doctrine, which we have set forth with great care in the first book. . . ."

After describing the sorceries of the Gnostic Marcus, Irenæus goes on:

Those who speak and act thus have even in our own regions led astray many women with seared consciences. Some have made public penance for it, others have been ashamed to do so and, taking refuge in silence, have gradually despaired of the divine life. Some have abandoned all things, others have remained undecided, being in the words of the proverb neither within nor without: such is the fruit they have gathered from the seed sown by the sons of gnosis (I, xiii, 7).

The disease was so close at hand and so dangerous that it is not surprising that the bishop who combated it could not regard it with the tranquil and detached curiosity of a twentieth-century scholar. He detested the heresy with all the love he had for God and for his flock. Sometimes he indulges in caustic Gallic humour (I, iv, 4); more often his tone is indignant. After transcribing the fantasies of the disciples of Marcus on the letters of the alphabet and their mysterious signification, he continues:

When you read this, my friend, I am certain you will laugh at their folly which thinks itself to be wisdom. But indeed it is lamentable to see sanctity, the greatness of truth, and the ineffable power and the dispensations of God thus twisted by these people and treated with *alpha* and *beta* and numbers (I, xvi, 3).

He is particularly bitter about the immorality of these people:

. . . There are some among them who give themselves up without restraint to the pleasures of the flesh, maintaining that one must concede carnal things to the carnal, and spiritual things to the spiritual. Some of them secretly corrupt the women to whom they teach this doctrine, and often women led astray by them and afterwards converted to the Church of God have confessed this fault with all their other errors. Others, banishing all shame, make a display of their disorders, and espouse the women they love and have stolen from their husbands. Others again, after a beginning full of reserve, claiming to live with these women as brother and sister, ultimately betray themselves by the fact that the sister is pregnant by the brother (I, vi, 3).

To authorise these licentious ways, some Gnostics set out to destroy the foundations of morality. Thus the disciples of Carpocrates claimed that good and evil differ only in human opinion;

they added that all things ought to be experienced here below; otherwise one will be condemned to have a body in a new existence (I, xxv, 4). Others, such as the Cainites, inspired by a kind of sadism, searched the Bible for the worst criminals as their patrons: Cain, Esau, Core, the Sodomites, and above all Judas, to whom they attributed a gospel (xxxv, 2).

### *The Faith of the Church*

To all these follies, Irenæus opposes with a touching serenity the faith of the Church:

The Church, although spread everywhere as far as the boundaries of the earth, has received from the apostles and their disciples faith in one single God, the Father Almighty, who has made heaven and earth and the seas and all that is in them; and in one Christ Jesus the Son of God, who was incarnate for our salvation; and in one Holy Spirit, who through the prophets has announced the dispensation, the advent and virginal birth, and passion and resurrection from the dead, and bodily ascension into heaven of the well-beloved Christ Jesus our Lord, and his [second] coming, when He will appear in heaven at the right hand of the Father, to restore all things and raise up all flesh and all humanity, so that before Christ Jesus our Lord, God, Saviour and King, according to the good pleasure of the invisible Father, every knee may bow, in heaven on earth and in hell, and every tongue may confess Him, and that He may deal to all a just judgment, sending to eternal fire the evil spirits, lying and apostate angels, and also wicked, unjust, rebellious and blaspheming men, and giving everlasting life and eternal glory to the just, the saints, and those who have kept his commandments, and have remained in his love, some from the beginning and others since their conversion (I, x, 1).

This passage is, to the best of our knowledge, the earliest theological work in which we find this "canonical" form of reasoning, this use of the Creed invoked precisely as a rule of faith in order to judge and condemn heresy. For thirty or forty years, doctrinal conflicts have multiplied, and heresies have sprung up; in face of these manifold errors the Church affirms the unity of its faith:

This is the preaching which the Church has received, this is her faith, as we have said. And although she is dispersed throughout the whole world, she keeps it carefully, as if she dwelt in one single house,

and believes in it unanimously, as if she possessed but one soul and one heart, and in complete agreement she preaches, teaches and transmits it, as if she had but one mouth. Certainly the languages on the surface of the earth are different, but the force of tradition is one and the same. The churches founded in Germany have not another faith or another tradition, nor the churches founded amongst the Iberians, the Celts, in the East, in Egypt or in Libya, or the centre of the world. But just as the sun, God's handiwork, is one and identical in all the world, so also the preaching of the truth shines out everywhere and enlightens all those who wish to arrive at a knowledge of it. The most powerful speaker amongst the heads of the churches will not teach another doctrine—for no one is above the Master—and the weakest in word will not diminish this tradition. For as the faith is one and the same, it is neither enriched by one who is able to speak much about it, nor impoverished by one who can say only little about it (*ibid.*, 2).

Thus the unity in the teaching of the faith is shown, not only by a comparison of the various nations converted to Christianity, but, what is more striking, by comparing the ignorant with the wise. Gnosticism claimed to be the religion of the élite: Christianity appears as the religion of all humanity. Though infinitely distant from God, all men, whosoever they may be, are called by the same revelation to the same faith. Even so, theology will have its place in religion thus understood. Irenæus explains how this is:

The greater or less intelligence of men appears, not in the hypothesis of another God different from the one who is the Demiurge, creator and foster-father of this universe, as if this one did not suffice us, nor in the hypothesis of another Christ, or another Only begotten. But it appears in the study of what has been said in parables, in order to assimilate it to the faith; in the exposition of the action and dispensation of God towards humanity; in showing how merciful God has been, both in the apostasy of the rebel angels and in the disobedience of man; in explaining why one and the same God has made temporal and eternal, heavenly and earthly things; in trying to understand why this invisible God has willed to reveal himself to the prophets, and this not in one but in different forms; in explaining why the human race has received several testaments, and what is the peculiar character of each of these; in understanding with gratitude why the Word of God became flesh and suffered; in explaining why the coming of the Son of God has taken place in these latter times, that is, why the principle appears at the end; in bringing to light all that is contained in the Scriptures concerning the end and future things; in explaining why

condemned peoples have been made by God co-heirs, members of his body and of the communion of saints; in explaining how this mortal body will be clothed with immortality, and the corruptible with incorruptibility; and how it can be said that "Those who were not (his) people have become (his) people," "he who was not loved has become beloved"; "she who was abandoned has more children than she who had a husband." Concerning these and other like mysteries the Apostle exclaims: "O the depth of the riches and of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and how hidden are his ways!" (I, x, 3).

### *Emergence of Theology*

This long passage is very interesting: we see in it the first effort of a great doctor to distinguish between theological speculation and the Faith. In the passages which immediately preceded this one and which have been transcribed above, Irenæus firmly opposed to the multiple fantasies of Gnosticism the unity of the Christian faith. Are Christians, then, forbidden all speculation on their faith? If this unjust constraint is imposed upon them, will they not be tempted to turn towards Gnosticism? The danger was not an imaginary one. The study of the Alexandrians, Clement and Origen, will show this: the faithful whom these teachers desired to help sought from them an interpretation of doctrine which would be in harmony with their culture. Not only their intellectual ambition but also their "love for Jesus" could not be content with an elementary catechism.<sup>11</sup>

These hungry souls had to be given freedom to seek for what they desired. Irenæus understood this, and hence he opened to them this immense field of theology, the fruitfulness of which will never be exhausted by the labours of the doctors.

We must also note that certain mysteries seem to him to be more worthy of study: they are the ones which Gnosticism and Marcionism called in question, namely: the unity of God, the unity of Christ, the unity of the creative work in heaven and on earth, and of the divine revelation in the two Testaments, and also the great problems of salvation which trouble so many souls, such as the question put by Diognetus: "Why did Christ come so late?"; and all the mysteries of predestination and reprobation which are con-

<sup>11</sup> Origen, *In Joann.*, v, 8. We shall return to this passage in the chapter on Origen.

templated and adored in the *Epistle to the Romans*. We realise already that Irenæus will not be occupied solely with controversy: the reading of the Bible, especially of St. Paul, the missionary activity carried out through manifold perils and against innumerable obstacles, and the loving contemplation of the mysteries of God will unceasingly present to his faith and his theology new horizons, at once more luminous and more mysterious.

### *The Divine Transcendence*

The second book is devoted to the refutation of the Gnostic errors. It contains, as has been rightly said, many acute and penetrating remarks.<sup>12</sup> This controversy has only a distant interest for us, but his treatment is governed by a wide theological perspective which is still illuminating for us to-day. Such is, to begin with, the affirmation of the unity of God, at the commencement of the book:

It is fitting that we should begin with the chief and fundamental thesis, which has as its object God the Creator, who made heaven and earth and all they contain, the God whom the blasphemers regard as the result of a Fall. We must show that there is nothing above Him nor after Him; that He created, not as a result of some other influence, but spontaneously and freely, inasmuch as He is the only God, the only Lord, the only Creator, the only Father, who alone contains all things and gives being to all things (II, i, 1).

This affirmation of the divine unity, so strongly set forth and constantly present to his mind, gives especial value to the passages in which he proclaims the divinity of the Son of God:

The Father is Lord, and the Son is Lord. The Father is God, and the Son is God; for He who is born of God is God. Thus, by the very essence and nature of his being we show that there is only one God, and yet according to the economy of our redemption, there is a Son and a Father.<sup>13</sup>

If, like Marcion, one were to suppose another principle, the most powerful of the two would be the true God (II, i, 2); we should

<sup>12</sup> So Lipsius, in his article in the *Dictionary of Christian Biography*, col. 268 a. Lipsius is an historian who is very well informed on Gnosticism.

<sup>13</sup> *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*, xlvii. Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, p. 545.



have to go on to infinity, always imagining another Pleroma, another God (II, i, 4). Hence we must either accept one God, the Creator of all that exists, or else an infinite multitude of gods (II, i, 5).

God has created, not by necessity, nor by accident, but out of his free goodness; again, not by an intermediate agent, but by his Word:

The supreme God has no need of anyone; He created all things and made all things by his Word; He did not need the help of the angels in order to create, nor of some Power inferior to Him and who was ignorant of the Father . . . ; but He himself, of Himself, in that nature which is beyond our speech and thought, predestined all things and made all things as He willed . . . ; and all that He made, He made by his indefatigable Word. For it is a characteristic of God's supreme eminence to have no need of external instruments in order to produce creatures; his own Word sufficed for all creation, as John the disciple of the Lord has said of Him: "All things were made by Him, and without Him nothing has been made" (II, ii, 4-5).

God's activity is his thought: "As soon as God conceived in his spirit, what He conceived was made" (II, iii, 2). He created freely, and out of nothing.<sup>14</sup>

This all-powerful God, supremely independent and transcendent in relation to every creature, is nevertheless not the unknown God imagined by the Gnostics: his creative work reveals Him:

How could the angels or the Demiurge be ignorant of the supreme God, seeing that they were in his domain, were themselves his creatures, and were contained by Him? Doubtless He might be invisible to them because of his transcendence; but He could not be unknown to them, because of his providence. They might indeed be, as the Gnostics say, infinitely distant from Him; but since his domain extends as far as them, they could not fail to know their Master, and could not be ignorant that He who created them is the Lord of all things. His nature is invisible but it is powerful, and it makes its all-powerful and sovereign transcendence seen and keenly felt by every soul. Certainly, "no one knoweth the Father but the Son (nor the Son except the Father), and those to whom the Son has revealed Him." But there is one thing which all beings know, and the reason with which souls are endowed

<sup>14</sup> "God has drawn from nothing all that exists, and has given existence to it as He has willed" (II, x, 2). "Freely and by his power He has made, disposed and finished all things, and the substance of all things is his will" (xxx, 9).

leads to this: it reveals to them that there is one God, the Lord of all things.<sup>15</sup>

This natural knowledge of God accorded to all men is very imperfect, but there is another kind of knowledge, infinitely more precious, of which the love of God is the source, and his gracious revelation the instrument:

If we think of his greatness and wonderful glory, no one can see God and live; for the Father is incomprehensible. But by virtue of his love, his condescension and his omnipotence, He grants to those who love Him the great gift of the vision of God, as the prophets have announced. For that which is impossible to men is possible to God. For man of himself sees not God; but God, because He wills it, is seen by men, by those whom He wills, when He wills, and as He wills, for God can do all things. He has revealed himself by the ministry of the Spirit, in a prophetic manner; He has revealed himself by the Incarnation of the Son, adoptively; and He will show himself in the kingdom of heaven paternally.<sup>16</sup>

Thus is overcome the difficulty which was insuperable for Hellenism and Gnosticism. Consumed with a desire to see God, Platonism strained itself in a vain effort to attain an ecstasy which exceeded its powers; Gnosticism on the other hand refused to the mass of humanity any access to God and granted it only to an élite, raised to this destiny by a privilege of nature. All these proud dreams fade away: no human philosophy can attain to the vision of God by its own efforts; no natural privilege can lay claim to it. Only God can invite us to it, and through his Son introduce mankind into the secret of his glory.

These exalted truths are the basis of our hope and also of our humility:

It is better and more useful to be simple and not very learned, and to be near to God by charity, than to appear very learned and clever and to blaspheme the Master. That is why Paul says: "Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifies." Certainly he was not questioning the true knowledge of God—for he would be condemning himself—but he knew that some were puffed up under the pretext of knowledge, and were losing the love of God. . . . It is therefore better to know nothing, and to be ignorant of the cause of that which exists, at the same time

<sup>15</sup> II, vi, 1. Also II, xxvii, 2; III, xxv, 1; IV, vi, 6. Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 528 et seq.

<sup>16</sup> IV, xx, 5. Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, p. 534.

believing in God and persevering in his love, rather than to boast of this knowledge and to fall away from this love which gives life; it is better to sacrifice all other scientific enquiry in order to know only Jesus Christ, the Son of God, crucified for us, rather than to be led astray into impiety by subtle and trifling questions (II, xxvi, 1).

This passage completes and throws light on those we have already quoted, and enables us to understand better the mind of Irenæus on this grave and delicate question of the relations between scientific research and the faith. His prudence is always calculated, and keeps him from any pusillanimity or any excessive mistrust; he is careful to repeat that there is a true knowledge of God, and that St. Paul is in this matter a model. At the same time he realises that there are around him so many temerarious pretensions that his efforts are directed to restraining pride rather than to encouraging research. Soon afterwards, the Alexandrian masters Clement and Origen, influenced by other preoccupations, will take up again the same problem, and will throw a different light upon it. Their noble endeavours will not always be free from temerity, yet their efforts will not be sterile, and the Church will know how to control and regulate them.<sup>17</sup>

For the rest, the humility which Irenæus requires in the Christian is not inertia, but on the contrary a persevering enquiry under the guidance of God our Master, so that not only here below but also in the next world, "God has always something to teach, and man always something to learn from Him" (II, xxviii, 3).

### *The Sources of the Faith: The Gospel*

In the two books which we have just examined, Irenæus has carried on a close controversy with the Gnostics: he has first set forth their systems, and then opposed to them the truth of the Christian faith, insisting above all on the fundamental doctrine of the existence of God and of the knowledge, natural or supernatural, which we can have of Him.

Influenced probably by the success of these first two books,

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Bk. IV, ch. xxviii, § 2. This other passage of Irenæus should also be read (*Adversus haereses*, II): "Since we have in the rule of faith the truth itself, and a manifest testimony concerning God, we must not pass from one explanation to another and abandon the firm and true knowledge of God, but rather we must submit all our explanations to this norm, exercise ourselves in the study of the mystery and real plan of God, and progress in the love of Him who made us and who constantly makes so many things."

Irenæus decided to explain in greater detail the sources of the Christian revelation, thus giving us the first outline of Fundamental Theology known in the history of the Church. Belonging as it does to the last years of the second century, and emanating from a master who transmitted to us the whole tradition of Asia, Rome, and Gaul, it is of the greatest interest.

The first document for the Christian is the Gospel, and accordingly Irenæus makes it the first subject of his study:

Matthew lived among the Hebrews, and wrote the Gospel in their language, and published it when Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome and founding the Church. After their death, Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, likewise transmitted to us in writing the teachings of Peter. Luke, the companion of Paul, in his turn set forth in a book the teachings of Paul. Then John, the disciple of the Lord, who leaned on his bosom, also published a Gospel, when he was living at Ephesus in Asia <sup>18</sup> (III, i, 1, 844).

Chronological indications are of secondary importance for Irenæus: what is important is the exclusive authority of the four gospels, with the witness they render to the one God. He represents them as completely independent of each other, alone regarded as canonical, and already the subject of study bringing out their profound agreement and their differences. In the case of the Gospel of St. John, this testimony has a particular value, in view of its origin.<sup>19</sup>

After the Gospels, Irenæus studies the preaching of the apostles, as narrated in the *Acts*. He points out that St. Paul did not preach a faith different from that of the apostles in Jerusalem: all taught one God and one Saviour.

### *Tradition*

While he is thus studying the Scriptures, the Bishop of Lyons invokes also the tradition of the Church. He is led to do so by his opponents themselves:

<sup>18</sup> On this text and the commentaries to which it has given rise, cf. L. de Grandmaison, *Jésus Christ*, Vol. I, pp. 221-225; Lagrange, *Saint Luc*, pp. xxv-xxvii.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. A. Camerlinck, *Saint Irénée et le canon du Nouveau Testament*, Louvain, 1886; J. Labourt, *De la valeur du témoignage d'Irénée dans la question johannique*, in *Revue Biblique*, Vol. VII, 1898, pp. 59-73; F. S. Gutjahr, *Die Glaubwürdigkeit des Irenäischen Zeugnisses über die Abfassung des vierten Evangeliums*, Graz, 1904; Lagrange, *Histoire ancienne du canon du Nouveau Testament*, pp. 46 et seq.

When we confound them by the Scriptures, they begin to accuse the Scriptures in themselves, saying they are erroneous, that they are without authority, that they do not agree, and that we cannot find the truth in them if we ignore tradition. For they say that it is not by the Scriptures that the truth has been transmitted, but by the living voice. . . . But when we make appeal ourselves to this tradition which has come from the Apostles, and which the presbyters succeeding to others have retained in the churches, they oppose tradition, saying that, being wiser not only than the presbyters but also than the apostles, they have themselves found the pure truth. . . . And thus they agree neither with Scripture nor with Tradition (III, ii, 1-2).<sup>20</sup>

To convict these slippery opponents of error, it was necessary to establish the existence of an incontestable tradition universally recognised. Irenæus finds the guarantee of this in the regular succession of the bishops who, by their origin, are lawfully linked with the apostles, and through the apostles with Christ:

The tradition of the apostles is manifest in the whole world; it needs only be examined in any church by one who wishes to know the truth. We can number the bishops who were instituted by the apostles and their successors down to ourselves; they taught nothing and knew nothing resembling these follies. But as it would take too long to transcribe here the successions of the bishops of all the churches, we will consider the greatest and most ancient, known by all, founded and established at Rome by the two very glorious apostles Peter and Paul: we will show that the tradition which it received from the apostles and the faith it has preached to men have come down to us through the succession of bishops; we will thus confound all those who, in whatever way, through self-satisfaction, vainglory, blindness or error, gather in a way other than they should.<sup>21</sup>

For with this church, because of the authority of its origin, every church ought to agree, that is, all the faithful from everywhere; and it is in it that the tradition which comes from the apostles has been conserved by these faithful (III, iii, 1-2).<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Van den Eynde, *Les normes de l'enseignement chrétien*, 1933, pp. 159 *et seq.*

<sup>21</sup> "Praeterquam oportet colligunt." Massuet sees in the word "colligunt" a reference to heretical conventicles. But we think it is rather an echo of the words of the Lord: "He who gathereth not with me, scattereth."

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Van den Eynde, *op. cit.*, pp. 173-179.

[As in other extracts from the Fathers, I have followed Père Lebreton's translation here. A stronger translation could well be justified. In view of the importance of the text, I give the Latin original of the concluding portion: "Ad hanc enim Ecclesiam, propter potentiorum principalitatem necesse est omnem convenire Eccle-

Irenæus next gives the catalogue of the bishops of Rome from the apostles' time: Linus, Anacletus, Clement: here he stops to bring out the authority of this witness of the apostolic preaching, and the force of his testimony given in his letter to the Corinthians. Then come Evaristus, Alexander, Sixtus, Telesphorus, the glorious martyr Hyginus, Pius, Anicetus, Soter, and finally Eleutherius. After the Roman church, Irenæus turns to the churches of Asia, so closely linked with the apostles, and which he himself knew so well, and lastly to the churches established among the barbarians. "These have neither paper nor ink, but salvation is written in their hearts by the Spirit, and they diligently keep the old tradition."

In presence of these manifest proofs, there is no need to go and seek the truth elsewhere: it is easy to receive it from the Church. . . . And if some little question should lead to a discussion, should we not have recourse to the oldest churches, those in which the apostles lived, and in the matter under discussion receive from them a certain and manifest doctrine? And if the apostles had not left us the Scriptures, would it not have been necessary to follow the order of the tradition they had entrusted to those to whom they confided the churches? (III, iv, 1).

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siam, hoc est eos qui sunt undique fideles, in qua semper ab his qui sunt undique conservata est ea quae est ab apostolis traditio." "Propter potentiorum principalem" signifies not merely "authority," but rather "more powerful authority." Keble, in the *Oxford Library of the Fathers*, translates: "on account of its higher original," referring back to the foundation by "two most glorious apostles Peter and Paul." Dr. Kidd adopts Montgomery Hitchcock's translation: "Unto this church, which holds a leading position among the churches." Bishop Gore translates: "on account of her superior pre-eminence." Abbot Chapman translates: "on account of its more powerful principality." Bishop Gore followed Langen in explaining the "superior pre-eminence" as due to the civil position of Rome rather than to its church. But this does violence to the context, and Chapman points out that even Pullar, who adopted this version at first in his *Primitive Saints and the See of Rome*, abandoned it in his third edition. It is also rejected by Dr. Bright. The more powerful position of the Roman church is obviously the result of its foundation by SS. Peter and Paul. With this church, all others must agree; or alternatively, to this church all others must have recourse—the precise meaning of *convenire ad* is disputed. Keble translates: "the whole church must needs agree with this church." Dr. Kidd: "unto this church must needs resort every church"; Gore: "to this church it must needs be that every church should come together"; Chapman: "To this Church it is necessary that every Church should come together (agree)." A full discussion will be found in the article *Irénée* in *Dict. de Théol. Catholique*. The best treatments in English are those of Chapman, *Bishop Gore and the Catholic Claims*, p. 64, Fortescue, *The Early Papacy*, and S. H. Scott, *The Eastern Churches and the Papacy*, pp. 36 et seq. See also Jalland, *The Church and the Papacy*, 1944, pp. 109-115.—T.R.]

This passage is worthy of special attention, and it has been the subject of much study.<sup>23</sup> The central idea is the decisive value of the testimony of the Church as a faithful echo of the teaching of the apostles; the guarantee of this fidelity is the episcopal succession which links the bishops of the present time to the apostles. This testimony can be seen everywhere, and Irenæus is not afraid to invoke the judgment of the churches of the barbarians. But by preference we must go to the most ancient churches, more closely linked to the apostles: Ephesus, Smyrna, and above all, the church of Rome. Leaving aside discussions concerning points of detail, we can say with Duchesne: "It is difficult to find a clearer expression (a) of doctrinal unity in the universal Church; (b) the unique and supreme importance of the Roman church as the witness, guardian and organ of apostolic tradition; (c) of its high pre-eminence in the Christian community as a whole."<sup>24</sup>

In the matter of the barbarian churches, we notice that the form of the argument varies. Irenæus here emphasises not only the apostolic succession but also the fruits of sanctity produced by the Spirit in the Church. This argument had already been used by St. Paul;<sup>25</sup> Irenæus, although emphasising the visible aspect of the Church, does not lose sight of the invisible, and inner life of the Spirit. He returns to this at the end of the book:

We have shown that the teaching of the Church is everywhere and always the same, and that it is based on the witness of the prophets, apostles and all the disciples. . . . We have received this faith from the Church; it is like a precious deposit in an excellent vessel; the Church renews it unceasingly and communicates its youth to the vessel

<sup>23</sup> Batiffol, *L'Eglise naissante*, pp. 249-253, and the previous works there mentioned (Harnack, Funk, Chapman, Boehmer); Roiron, in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. VIII, 1917, pp. 36-51.

<sup>24</sup> Duchesne, *Eglises séparées*, p. 119, quoted by Batiffol, *op. cit.*, p. 252. We notice that the three groups whose testimony is invoked by Irenæus represent the churches with which he was connected during the three periods of his life, Asia, Rome and Gaul. This does not in any way lessen the significance of the passage: personal memories may have guided him, but they do not govern his judgment. The unrivalled importance he attributes to the Roman church is not the result of his impressions or of his memories: if that were the case he would doubtless give more weight to the testimony of Smyrna, which was the place of his Christian formation, and which was more immediately linked with the apostles, for between it and them there was only one intermediary, Polycarp. Yet Smyrna comes only in the second place, and does not occupy in his argument the unique position which he gives to Rome.

<sup>25</sup> II Cor., iii, 2.

containing it. It is the gift of God entrusted to the Church, it communicates the Spirit to God's creature so that all the members who participate in it are vivified; and therein consists communion with Christ, that is, the Holy Spirit, the pledge of incorruptibility, foundation of our faith, and the ladder which enables us to ascend to God. For it is written: "In the Church God has established apostles, prophets, doctors, and every operation of the Spirit"; those people do not share in it who do not come to the Church but deprive themselves of life by their perverse minds and their evil works. For where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God, and where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church and all grace, and the Spirit is truth. Thus, those who do not belong to her do not receive from her maternal breasts the food of life, and do not drink from the pure fountain which springs from the body of Christ, but they dig out from earthly ditches broken cisterns, and drink putrid water; they flee from the faith of the Church which would guide them, and reject the Spirit which would teach them (III, xxiv, 1).

Thus the exigencies of controversy do not make Irenæus forget the inner life and perpetual youth which the Holy Spirit fosters in the Church. On the contrary, it is this profound theological intuition that gives to the controversy its chief significance. Tradition consists not merely in the perpetuity of the testimony which, by the regular succession of the bishops, goes back to the apostles and to Christ; it is this living chain, this testimony of the Spirit, that witnesses to and assures our union with Christ, not only by faithful acceptance of his doctrine, but also by the communication of his life. This deep truth will be less apparent in Tertullian; in him the theology of tradition will retain all its juridical force; it will be in the hands of controversialists a powerful weapon against heresy, but it will no longer deal with the inmost source of the love of a Christian for the Church.<sup>26</sup>

### *The Progressive Education of Humanity*

We ought now to study in the books of Irenæus the deposit of faith entrusted by Christ to the Church and unceasingly vivified by the Spirit. We cannot, however, follow it out here in all its

<sup>26</sup> Batiffol (*L'Eglise naissante*, p. 239) gives this appreciation of the theology of Irenæus: "While refuting Gnostic errors, he outlines the theory of the Church and her doctrinal office with a fullness and firmness which make the third book in particular a veritable treatise on the Church, and the earliest one we possess."



development;<sup>27</sup> but we must at least mention the important thesis which dominates the whole of the anti-Marcionite controversy. The *Antitheses* of Marcion could be refuted effectively by showing from texts of Christ or St. Paul that the Law and the Gospel are in agreement. Irenæus does this more than once, and Tertullian will lay yet more stress on it, but this refutation, while it silenced the opponent, did not altogether satisfy the Christian: all through the Old Testament, and still more in comparison with the New, we find a remarkable religious advance and a great transformation. How is this to be explained? Why did not the God of the Jews reveal to them what He said later on to Christians, if in fact the God of the Jews is the God of the Christians?

To this pressing question, Irenæus replies in the course of his fourth book, by explaining the divine plan, which has gradually and patiently brought about the education of the human race. "Why did God not create man at the beginning in a state of perfection?" The heretics appeal to the weakness of their Demiurge, who was not able to make a finished work; that is an impiety, for God is almighty. At the same time the creature, because he is a creature, is necessarily imperfect, and must be led by degrees to perfection. That is how a child grows, and how an imperfect Christian is perfected,<sup>28</sup> and in the same way the human race as a whole has had to improve progressively, under the divine influence. From the creation, the end which God aimed at was to make man to his own image and likeness; his whole providential education tends towards this distant terminus:

It is by this education that man, produced and created, conforms himself gradually to the image and likeness of the unproduced God. The Father chooses and orders, the Son works and creates, the Spirit feeds and augments, and man gently progresses and ascends towards perfection, that is, comes nearer to the unproduced God; for He who is not produced is perfect, and this is God. It was necessary that man should first be created and then grow, then become an (adult) man, then multiply, then develop his powers, then arrive at glory, and that arriving at glory he should see his Master. For it is God that he must

<sup>27</sup> On the doctrine of the Trinity in Irenæus, cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 517-617.

<sup>28</sup> Irenæus here has in mind the words of St. Paul to the Corinthians: "I have given you milk, not solid food, for you could not yet receive the latter." Cf. IV, xxxviii, 2.

see, and the sight of God makes him incorruptible, and incorruptibility makes one very close to God (IV, xxxviii, 3).

Understood in this elevated way, and in this divine light, the whole history of mankind takes shape and becomes clear. God created us through love; He had no need of man:

He did not form Adam because He needed him, but in order to have someone to receive his benefits; and if He tells us to follow Him, it is not because He has need of our services, but because He desires to save us, for to follow the Saviour is to share in salvation, to follow the light is to live in the light, and those who are in the light do not illumine the light but are illumined by it. . . . Thus, at the beginning God formed man out of love; He chose the patriarchs in order to save them; He taught an intractable people to follow God, He raised up on earth prophets to accustom man to carry the Spirit and to be in communion with God; He himself had need of no one, but to those who have need of Him he offered the grace of being in communion with Him. . . . and in innumerable ways He worked on the human race in order to make it apt for salvation. That is why St. John says in the *Apocalypse*: "His voice is as the voice of the great waters." Truly the Spirit resembles the great waters, for it is rich, and the Father is great. And the Word goes amongst all these men, filling with good things those who submit to Him, and giving to the whole creation a law worthy of it (IV, xiv, 1-2).

### *The Law*

Hence this law is not the work of a blind Demiurge, and the good God did not come to abrogate it: it prepared men for the coming of Christ. Hence what Jesus required from those who wished to follow Him was in the first place to keep the commandments and then to leave all things and follow him (IV, xii, 5). In the Sermon on the Mount, He did not abolish the Law, but completed it by setting forth a more internal and more perfect justice:

For the Law, written for slaves, formed the soul from without, by fastening on the body and drawing the soul as by a chain to obey the commandments so that man might learn to serve God. The Word has delivered the soul, and has thereby taught the body voluntarily to purify itself. In doing this He had to remove from man the chains of slavery which he was accustomed to bear, and teach him to serve God without chains. But it was also necessary that the commandments of

liberty should extend our subjection to our King, so that no one should go backwards or show himself unworthy of his liberator; and children should display towards the Father of the family as much piety and obedience as did the slaves, but also a still greater trust, inasmuch as free activity is more noble and more glorious than servile submission (IV, xiii, 2).<sup>29</sup>

### *The Divine Action upon Man*

These beautiful words, directly based upon St. Paul, bring out the tremendous advantages of the new covenant and of the liberty of the children of God, but without detriment to the Law. There is no antithesis between them, but a progressive education, planned by God from the beginning, and continually carried out by Him: "The two Testaments are therefore the work of one and the same Father of the family, Our Lord Jesus Christ, who conversed with Abraham and Moses, and who in the new covenant has restored liberty to us and made grace superabound" (IV, ix, 1).

From the time of creation, the heavenly Father carried on his work not by subordinate agents but "by himself, that is, by the Son and the Holy Spirit,"<sup>30</sup> who are, as Irenæus often calls them, the two "hands" of the Father.<sup>31</sup> On the day of creation, the Father made man by the Word and the Spirit, and has never abandoned him. "Adam was not able to flee from the hands of God" (V, i, 3), and "at the end of time, the Word of God, uniting himself to the old substance from which Adam was formed, produced a living and perfect man who was united to the perfect Father" (*Ibid.*).

Hence, whether we consider the creation of man or his sanctification, the divine work was carried out by the common action of the three Persons:

<sup>29</sup> Cf. *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*, xcvi.

<sup>30</sup> "Fecit ea per semetipsum, hoc est per Verbum et Sapientiam suam" (II, xxx, 9). Cf. IV, xx, 1: "Hence the angels did not form us: the angels could not make an image of God. Only the Word of the Lord could do this, not a power removed from the Father of the universe. And God had no need of them in order to make what He had decided to make, for He was not without his own hands. He had always with him the Word and Wisdom, the Son and the Spirit, by which and in which He made all things freely and spontaneously. It was to them that He spoke when He said: 'Let us make man in our image and likeness.'" We note here the identification of wisdom with the Holy Spirit, a feature in which St. Irenæus resembles his contemporary St. Theophilus. Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 567 et seq.

<sup>31</sup> On this expression, cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 579 et seq.

God is intelligent, and accordingly He has made all creatures by the Word. God is a spirit, and so He has embellished all things by the Spirit. The Word lays the foundation, that is, labours to give to a being its substance, and adorns it with existence, and the Spirit ensures for these different forces their forms and beauty (*Demonstration*, V).

Thus the incarnation of the Son has prepared us to receive the Spirit of God:

The Lord came to us, not according to the whole measure of his power, but so that we should be able to see Him. He could indeed have come to us in his incorruptible glory, but we could not as yet bear the greatness of his glory. That is why He, the perfect bread of the Father, has given Himself to us as to little children, under the form of milk. This was his presence according to man. He desired that, being nourished by the breasts of his flesh, and accustomed by this food to eat and drink the Word of God, we might be able to assimilate to ourselves the bread of immortality, which is the Spirit of the Father (IV, xxxviii, 1).

The divine action thus appears to us as coming down to us from the Father by the Son and in the Spirit. If we consider it as it is in ourselves, we attain first to the Spirit, who reveals to us the Son and takes us to Him, then the Son takes us to the Father.<sup>32</sup>

All this is as yet uncompleted here below; the divine work continues, tending always to the same end, forming man to the image and likeness of God.<sup>33</sup> Of this transformation we possess as yet only

<sup>32</sup> "The presbyters, disciples of the apostles, thus describe the progress of those who are saved, and the stages of their ascent: By the Spirit they ascend to the Son, and by the Son to the Father, and lastly, the Son gives up his work to the Father, as the apostle has said" (V, xxxvi, 8). This twofold aspect of the divine action is well brought out in a beautiful passage in the *Demonstration*, vii: "When we are regenerated by baptism, which is given us in the name of these three Persons, we are enriched in this second birth with the good things which are in God the Father, by the means of his Son with the Holy Spirit. For all those who have within themselves the Spirit of God are led to the Word, that is, to the Son; and the Son takes them and presents them to his Father, and the Father communicates incorruptibility to them. Hence, without the Spirit we cannot see the Word of God, and without the Son one cannot reach the Father, for the knowledge of the Father is the Son, and the knowledge of the Son of God is obtained only by means of the Holy Spirit. It is the Son who, by office, distributes the Spirit, according to the good pleasure of the Father, to those whom the Father wishes and as the Father wishes."

<sup>33</sup> "The nature had to appear first, then the mortal element had to be overcome and absorbed by the immortal, the corruptible by the incorruptible, and man had to become conformed to the image and likeness of God" (IV, xxxviii, 4). "By the effusion of the Spirit man becomes spiritual and perfect, and he is indeed in the

a pledge in the Spirit, which dwells within us and makes us spiritual, "the mortal element being absorbed by immortality," and which makes us groan and cry to the Father:

Thus if, having received this pledge, we now cry: "Abba, Father," what will it be when we rise again and see Him face to face, when all the members, running together, sing the hymn of triumph in honour of Him who has raised them from the dead and has given them life eternal? For if already the pledge, taking hold of man and assimilating him to Himself, makes him cry, "Abba, Father," what will be the effect of the whole grace of the Spirit, given to men by God? It will make us like to Him, it will render us perfect according to the will of the Father; for it will make man to the image and likeness of God (V, viii, 1).<sup>34</sup>

### *The Theology of St. Irenæus*

This brief outline will have enabled us to grasp the character of the theology of St. Irenæus. It appears in the first place as a work of controversy, but very soon the great doctor frees himself from his polemical preoccupations; he contemplates the truth in itself and raises his readers up to it. In its great light one forgets the ambitious constructions of Basilides and Valentine and the anti-theses of Marcion. It is this which gives to the theological work of St. Irenæus a vitality which has defied the lapse of years. The teaching of the Church, as he describes it, appears indeed as a "precious deposit placed in an excellent vessel; the Spirit ever renews its youth, and communicates its youth to the vessel containing it."

### *The Salvation of the Flesh*

There is a last aspect of this great work which remains to be considered. We have seen how the Spirit sanctifies us and prepares us for the vision of God. But man is not only a soul; he is also a body. Ought we to regard the body only as an evil principle,

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image and likeness of God. But if in some man the Spirit is not united to his soul, that man is imperfect, he remains animal and carnal. He has indeed in his flesh the image of God, but he does not receive His likeness by the Spirit" (V, vi, 1).

<sup>34</sup> On this sanctifying action of the Holy Spirit, cf. A. d'Alès, *La doctrine de l'Esprit en saint Irénée*, in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XIV, 1924, pp. 497-538; cf. also *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 604-614.

incapable of salvation? Such was the Gnostic error; Irenæus rejects it with all his force in the fifth and last book of his work.

Those people are vain who despise the whole creation of God, who deny that the flesh can be saved, who disdain its regeneration and maintain that it is incapable of incorruptibility. If the flesh is not saved, then the Lord has not redeemed us with his blood, and the Eucharistic chalice is not the communion of his blood, and the bread which we break is not the communion of his body. It cannot be blood if it comes not from the veins and flesh and human substance which truly became the Word of God. But "He has redeemed us by his blood," as his apostle has said . . . we are his members, and are nourished by his creature, and He has given us this creature, making his sun to rise, and showering down rain according to his will. And the chalice which comes from his creature is affirmed by Him to be his blood, and by it He nourishes our own blood. Likewise the bread which comes from creation He affirms to be his body, by which He nourishes our own body. Seeing that the mingled chalice and the bread that has been made receive the word of God and become the Eucharist, the Body of Christ, which nourishes and preserves the substance of our flesh, how can it be maintained that the flesh which is nourished by the Body and Blood of Christ and is his member, is not susceptible of the grace of God which is eternal life? (V, ii, 2).

We see in this beautiful passage that the Catholic theology of the flesh is based upon the whole Christian doctrine. Creation, Incarnation, and the Eucharist—all these high doctrines repeat that the flesh, the work of God, united to the Son of God the food and source of supernatural life, cannot be the essentially evil principle despised and condemned by the Gnostics. We also see how the doctrines thus invoked give an unshakable foundation to the faith, and this must be because they were themselves not questioned. This observation is particularly important in the matter of the doctrine of the Eucharist. At that date, and for long after the time of Irenæus,<sup>35</sup> this doctrine was beyond all controversy, and that not because of indifference, but because of its certainty.<sup>36</sup>

From all this Irenæus infers that the flesh is capable of being

<sup>35</sup> The first controversies will appear ten centuries later, at the time of Berengarius.

<sup>36</sup> In addition to the passage just given, Irenæus deals elsewhere also with the Eucharistic doctrine, and always in the same definite way: IV, xvii, 1; xviii, 3-4, xxxiii, 2. [St. Irenæus teaches in Lib. iv, c. 17, that the Eucharist is a sacrifice, calling it the Oblation of the New Testament, and "the oblation of the Church." —Tr.]

saved: if not, the Word of God would not have become flesh (V, xiv, 1). Doubtless the flesh can be doomed to corruption, and condemned to eternal death, but it can also rise again to an incorruptible life.

### *Millenarianism*

The book concludes with a study of the Last Things. In these last five chapters, Irenæus's theology, elsewhere always so measured and prudent, follows Papias into millenarian dreams: <sup>37</sup> before the Last Judgment, the just will reign with Christ here below for a thousand years.

This belief, widespread in Jewish eschatology, was in the eyes of many Christians authorised by the descriptions in the *Apocalypse* of St. John. In ch. xx-xxii of this book, we read how Christ will triumph: the devil will be chained up for a thousand years and shut up in the abyss, then the martyrs will rise again and reign with Christ for a thousand years. Afterwards Satan will come forth from his prison, seduce the nations, send them forth against Christ, and will be finally defeated by God. We read also that the heavenly Jerusalem will descend to the earth, clothed with the light of God. Adopting these symbols, which were familiar to his readers, St. John gave them a spiritual significance which went beyond the Jewish dreams. But in the course of the second century, some Christians were deceived thereby, and understood these thousand years of Messianic felicity in a literal sense.

This error was prevalent among the heretics, as for instance in Cerinthus, who gave it its grossest and most obviously Jewish form.<sup>38</sup> We find it also in Papias, a presbyter much attached to the Church and to tradition.<sup>39</sup> Justin, in his *Dialogue* (LXXX), while

<sup>37</sup> On Millenarianism, cf. L. Gry, *Le Millénarisme dans ses origines et son développement*, Paris, 1904.

<sup>38</sup> Gaius, writing in Rome at the commencement of the third century, speaks thus of the doctrine: "Cerinthus says that, after the resurrection, Christ will reign on the earth, the flesh will live again in Jerusalem, and will there serve the passions and pleasures. An enemy of the divine Scriptures, he wishes to deceive mankind, and says that there will be a thousand years of wedding feasts" (quoted by Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, III, xxviii, 2). Similar statement in Dionysius of Alexandria, in Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxv, 3.

<sup>39</sup> Irenæus, *Adv. haereses*, V, xxxiii, 3-4: "The presbyters who saw John the disciple of the Lord say that they heard him set forth thus the teaching of the Lord concerning the Last Things: There shall come days when vines will grow having each ten thousand stems, and on each stem ten thousand branches, and on each

allowing that others do not hold these doctrines, affirms that many Christians, and all those who are "completely orthodox," believe as he does in the reign of a thousand years. Irenæus goes farther still: reacting against the allegorical exegesis so much abused by the Gnostics, he adheres to the literal interpretation, and holds that this cannot be abandoned without endangering the faith.<sup>40</sup> His authority will influence Tertullian and St. Hippolytus.<sup>41</sup>

Nevertheless, even in the second century, Millenarianism, though widespread, was not universally accepted.<sup>42</sup> We do not find it in any formula of faith; its absence is noticeable in Roman works other than Justin—e.g. in those of Clement and Hermas;<sup>43</sup> and, what is still more remarkable, we do not find it in the other work of Irenæus, the *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*. Here the description of the Last Things (ch. lxi) is based on an allegorical exegesis, and no longer on the literal interpretation of the *Apocalypse* as was the case in the *Adversus haereses*.<sup>44</sup>

From the beginning of the third century, Millenarianism began to lose ground. In Rome it was warmly attacked by Gaius; at Alexandria it was refuted by Origen, and thirty years later by the bishop, St. Dionysius. In the fourth century it was regarded by the

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branch ten thousand twigs, and on each twig ten thousand bunches of grapes, and in each bunch ten thousand berries, and each berry when crushed will give twenty-five measures of wine. And when some one of the saints shall gather a cluster of grapes, another will say to him: 'I am better, gather me and through me bless the Lord.' In the same way a grain of wheat shall produce ten thousand spikes, and each spike shall bear ten thousand grains, and each grain shall give ten pounds of fine flower; and the other fruits, seeds, and herbs shall be just as fruitful, according to their species; and all the animals using this nourishment, produced by the earth, shall live together in peace and unity, and shall be completely subjected to mankind. Such is the testimony of Papias, the disciple of John the companion of Polycarp and an old man; he has written it in the fourth of his five books."

<sup>40</sup> *Adv. haereses*, V, xxxi, 1; V, xxxv, 1.

<sup>41</sup> Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.*, IV, xxxix. In two works which have not come down to us, Tertullian set forth the same hopes: *De spe fidelium*, *De Paradiso*. So also Hippolytus, *De Christo et antichristo*; *Capita adversus Gaium*. Cf. D'Alès, *La Théologie de saint Hippolyte*, p. 198. We find the same theses at the beginning of the fourth century in St. Methodius, *Banquet*, IX, v.

<sup>42</sup> Gry (*op. cit.*, p. 66) thinks that one can "perhaps" find traces of Millenarianism in the prayers of the *Didache*, x, 5. He adds: "The author of this little work is moreover a convinced upholder of the twofold resurrection, and seems to echo reminiscences of *Apocalypse*, xvi, 6-8."

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Gry, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Lebreton in *Revue de l'Institut catholique de Paris*, Vol. XII, 1907, pp. 140-142. Harnack (*op. cit.*, p. 62) says that the two works show that Irenæus changed his opinion. Tixeront and Armitage Robinson do not think so: see their notes on this passage.



Cappadocians and by St. Jerome and St. Augustine as an opinion definitively abandoned.<sup>45</sup>

### *The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*

In connection with Millenarianism, we have just mentioned a small work by St. Irenæus, the *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*. For a long time this work was known only as one mentioned by Eusebius. But an Armenian version was discovered in 1904, and it was published for the first time in 1907.<sup>46</sup>

A later work than the *Adversus haereses*, which it quotes (ch. xcix), this treatise is not so important as its predecessor. On the subject of the Last Things it seems to correct it; at least it sets forth a more prudent and more reserved doctrine. But that is the only feature which distinguishes it from the larger work.<sup>47</sup> This little book is precious to us, for it shows us the bishop of Lyons not now as a controversialist and a doctor, but as a catechist, expounding to all, and especially to the faithful, the Christian faith and its proofs.<sup>48</sup>

### *Importance of the Theological Work of St. Irenæus*

Our very rapid study of Irenæus will at least have given a glimpse of the exceptional richness of his work. Harnack has well said that if Tertullian provided Catholic theology with a good number of formulæ, it was above all Irenæus who gave it its content.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Bardy, art. *Millénarisme*, in *Dict. de Théol. cath.*, Vol. X, cols. 1762-1763.

<sup>46</sup> The various editions have been mentioned above, p. 661, n. 1.

<sup>47</sup> We may also mention the idea of the seven heavens, which savours of Jewish literature, especially the *Ascension of Isaías* (cf. *Revue de l'Institut catholique*, Vol. XII, 1907, pp. 136-139; Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 77, cf. p. 41); the archangel who commands on the earth is similar to the "venerable angel" in Hermas (cf. *Revue de l'Institut catholique*, Vol. XII, 1907, p. 139). These are only secondary features, but they give the impression of a popular tradition.

<sup>48</sup> This short work is also indebted to the *Apologies*, and especially that of Justin Martyr; cf. Armitage Robinson, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-23.

<sup>49</sup> *Dogmengeschichte*, Vol. I, p. 556. We may also recall the opinion of Zahn (*op. cit.*, p. 410): "Irenæus . . . did not set himself forth as a philosopher, or even as a teacher of a 'barbarian philosophy' like the apologists from Aristides to Clement. But how he surpasses them in firmness of judgment, vigour of thought, and clarity of expression! Irenæus is the first writer of the post-apostolic age who

We shall find quite often in the course of the history of the Church that the great doctors, not content with refuting heretics, have turned controversy into a new source of truth. It suffices here to mention the names of St. Athanasius, the Cappadocians, and above all St. Augustine. Irenæus belongs to the same category. In order to oppose his adversaries who endeavour to destroy the edifice of Christian dogma, he does not content himself with repulsing their attacks, but he raises still higher than his predecessors the walls of the glorious city, and ensures with greater care their solidity and cohesion.

In the first place he gives a deeper foundation to dogma itself, by fixing the relations between faith and theology, and the conditions of our knowledge of God; then he studies the sources of the Christian revelation, Scripture and Tradition, the magisterium of the Church, and the great Christian truths, namely the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Redemption, and the Last Things. All these studies are carried on with a vigour and a prudence which we shall rarely find in so high a degree or so constantly combined. Thus, in the question of the relation between the common faith and learned theology, Irenæus endeavours above all to ensure by a filial docility communion with the Church, in which the Christian finds the gifts of the Spirit and union with Christ. In the obscurity of the present life he prefers charity to speculation; and yet he is very careful to promote theological study and opens up to it an immense field of research. On the subject to Tradition, he is careful to go back to the apostles and through them to Christ by means of the episcopal succession; but he insists quite as much on the witness of the Spirit which vivifies the body of Christ and unceasingly renews its youth. In the theology of salvation, he brings out into full light the fruit of the Incarnation, the Son of God recapitulating and renewing all things in Himself,<sup>50</sup> and repeats that Christ has re-

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can be called a theologian. If it is true that a diligent study of the manifold elements and sources of the Christian faith, such as distinguished Eusebius and Jerome, does not suffice to constitute a theologian, but that there is also required a synthetic and harmonious conception of the relations between God and the world, based on the special principles of the Christian faith, then the only ones who can be compared with Irenæus are Origen and Augustine. Neither Athanasius nor Cyril can be compared with these three men, and in disengaging theology from all extraneous influences, Irenæus surpasses them all."

<sup>50</sup> On "recapitulation" in the Christology of St. Irenæus, cf. D'Alès, in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. VI, 1916, pp. 185-211.

deemed us by his blood. His theology of the Trinity is the firmest and richest we find in the ante-Nicene Fathers.<sup>51</sup> Against the heresies of Marcion and the Gnostics it vindicates with great force the unity of God, but at the same time it heralds the Greek theology of the divine Persons, describing their personal part in creation and in revelation. Then, after contemplating the divine activity, which comes from the Father through the Son in the Spirit, it takes us back from the Spirit through the Son to the Father by the "recapitulation" which Pope St. Dionysius in the third century will set forth in his letter to the Alexandrians, adopting the ideas and even the terminology of Irenæus.<sup>52</sup>

If we ask whence Irenæus derived his wide understanding of the great theological ideas, we must answer that the source was his respect and love for Tradition as a whole. He was in no way a partisan, nor did he belong to a school: his school was the Church, his party that of Christ. He venerated St. Polycarp and Papias, the presbyters of Asia, and equally St. Justin, the apologist-philosopher; every part of the Bible was sacred to him and familiar to him; the history of the patriarchs, the books of the prophets, the psalms, the sapiential books; the doctrine of St. Paul, so little stressed by the writers of the second century, is brought out in full relief by him, and similarly also the Gospel of St. John, which is usually kept in the background by the apologists.

This broad outlook and comprehensive mind which is manifested in the works of the bishop of Lyons is in harmony with his life: he was at once an Asiatic, a Roman, and bishop of Gaul; he combined all these in the wide charity of a truly Catholic soul. It was as an ambassador of peace that he was sent to Rome by the confessors of Lyons; it was also as a peacemaker that he intervened some twelve years later in the Easter quarrel.<sup>53</sup> The Church has remembered this with thankfulness: she celebrates in Irenæus the controversialist who destroyed heresies, the missionary and pastor who evangelised the French, but above all she delights to see in him the peacemaker who allayed the conflicts between Rome and Asia.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 540-615.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Bk. IV, ch. xxvi, § 1. On this twofold aspect, the divine activity which descends to us and the sanctification which raises us up to God, see above, p. 538.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. *infra*, p. 724.

<sup>54</sup> Eusebius already wrote: "Irenæus rightly bore his name, and was a peacemaker in his actions, who counselled and preached for the peace of the churches. He wrote not only to Victor, but to many heads of churches to give them the same counsel relating to the question discussed" (*Hist. eccles.*, V, xxiv, 18).

## § 2. CANONICAL LEGISLATION AND THE ECCLESIASTICAL HIERARCHY

### *Development of Discipline*

The study of St. Irenæus has brought before us the theological effort of the Catholic Church in its struggle against heresy. But it was not enough to assure the correctness of belief, it was also necessary to tighten the bonds which united Christians with each other and with the Church, and then, by a more careful selection and a more detailed preparation, to assure so far as was possible the constancy of those who presented themselves for baptism. With these preoccupations in mind we find the Church in the last years of the second and the early years of the third centuries examining with greater strictness those who desired to join her, and forming them by a more rigorous discipline. We find the same increased care manifested towards Christians, by a greater uniformity in the liturgy, and by partly new canonical laws concerning penance. About the same time the clergy were organised in a more complete manner, and we find besides bishops, priests and deacons, other "sub-deacons" and lesser clerics. Attempts were also made to determine with greater precision the canon of Scripture, and the rules concerning Tradition.

This great effort of canonical legislation was manifest above all at Rome, but it was found also throughout the Church as a whole. And while each community was improving its organisation, it became more closely linked with the other Christian communities, and with the Roman Church, the centre of unity.

### *The Organisation of the Local Churches*

In this part of our study, we must not look for a new constitution, or a code of Canon Law, comprising a collection of decrees which call only for commentaries. In these early years of Christianity reforms were not enacted by a legislator by specific decrees: they were enshrined in texts which testified to them but did not precisely initiate them. Thus we find at the beginning of the third century at Rome and at Carthage laws governing the catechumenate, and also a "discipline of the secret" which were nowhere found in the

second century.<sup>1</sup> These two institutions were closely linked, and must be studied together.

### *The Catechumenate*

If we seek in the first place the influences or preoccupations which led to this new legislation,<sup>2</sup> we shall find these mainly in the conditions of life in the Church, its rapid propagation, the persecutions she underwent, and the dangers presented everywhere by the seductions of heresy.

During a long period the Church had won her new children singly; they had come to her under the guidance and guarantee of the older Christians who had converted them and knew them personally. Now this was no longer the case: the Church was already a standard lifted up among the nations; the Apologies revealed her to all, and the persecutions did so still more. People she had not hitherto known came to her each day in increasing numbers. Could she baptise these on a simple profession of faith as Philip had baptised the Ethiopian eunuch? Could she entrust to them the Christian mysteries? Or was it not rather necessary to imitate the reserve of Jesus, who did not trust himself to those who went to Him because He knew what was in man?

The motives for this attitude were the more urgent because the danger of apostasy became greater in face of more violent persecutions: the *Shepherd* of Hermas has shown us the anxiety of the Roman Church in respect of her lapsed children. If the renewal is so difficult, would it not be better to reserve the grace of baptism

<sup>1</sup> On the catechumenate, see especially Dom B. Capelle, *L'Introduction du catéchuménat à Rome*, in *Recherches de Théologie ancienne et médiévale*, Vol. V, 1933, pp. 129-154; Dom P. de Puniet, article *Catéchuménat*, in *Dict. d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*.

<sup>2</sup> Dom Capelle sets them forth thus: "The great expansion of Christianity in the second century—Tertullian will soon boast that only the deserts were the pagan temples—was certainly one of the determining reasons. Recruits flocked in, they had to be formed with care, and their numbers prompted the organisation of this formation. It was also necessary to prepare them for dangers, pagan and heretical. Between 150 and 200, theological thought was very active, and controversy constant. A Christian had therefore to be given a solid foundation. This seems to be the explanation of the surprising insistence on a three years' preparation, coming suddenly after a period characterized by complete facility of entry. Possibly the Marcionite crisis contributed to make the reform more necessary and more urgent. Marcion had organised his ecclesiastical system very carefully. This was one of the reasons for his success, and we know that the Church hastened to imitate him" (p. 150).

for those who may be counted on to keep it pure of all apostasy?

The danger of heresy was perhaps still more to be feared. St. Irenæus describes the lamentable inconstancy of those Christians who fall away into the Gnostic sects, escape from them, and fall yet again. Once more the same question arises in the minds of the heads of the Church: had these weak Christians been received too quickly and too easily?<sup>3</sup>

### *Admission to the Catechumenate*

Influenced by these various motives, the heads of the Church, before conferring baptism upon neophytes, subjected them to a long preparation and to many tests. If we wish to understand the significance of these new arrangements, it will be useful to recall the character of baptismal initiation at the time of Justin.<sup>4</sup> Candidates for baptism were asked for a profession of faith and a promise to conform their lives to Christian teaching; "then they were taught to pray and to ask for God by fasting the remission of their sins, while the other Christians prayed and fasted with them" (*Apol.*, I, lxi, 2). Baptism followed immediately.<sup>5</sup> This text, it is true, describes only the final preparation immediately preceding the baptism, and implies a prior instruction. Before candidates could profess their belief in the Church's doctrine they must have been given instructions concerning it, but there is no evidence that such instruction was organised in common, or that its duration was determined by the legislation of the Church.

Moreover—and this is a very important point—the description

<sup>3</sup> To these motives, which were the most important, others may have been added. Dom Capelle (*op. cit.*, p. 150) writes: "There was a last cause, certainly not negligible and perhaps decisive, the indirect influence of the mystery religions." He notes in Origen the terminology of the mysteries, and thinks traces of it can be found still more easily in Clement. These indications are not to be neglected, but we must be careful not to exaggerate their significance. The use of the language of the mysteries, so frequent in Philo, Clement and Origen, is a literary custom rather than a religious one.

<sup>4</sup> The texts have been quoted in Bk. II, pp. 463-465.

<sup>5</sup> On this passage, Dom Capelle (*op. cit.*, p. 132) justly remarks: "This period of prayer and fasting was not connected with a progressive initiation: it was a simple ritual act, and fairly short. The real preparation must have taken place previously. Justin does not speak of a common teaching for catechumens. Doubtless it was not yet officially organised. The form and duration of the initiation depended on the persons and circumstances. But the Church desired certain guarantees before proceeding to baptism. The *Apology* mentions the guarantee the candidates had to give, but we do not know what form this took."

Justin gives of the baptismal Mass and of the Sunday Mass<sup>6</sup> does not mention the distinction, so clear in later documents, between the Mass of the Catechumens and the Mass of the Faithful: indeed, the very fact that the apologist communicates to his pagan readers the liturgy of the Christian mysteries is a sufficient indication that the Secret did not as yet exist.

Things were no longer the same in the time of Tertullian. In his treatise *De praescriptione* this writer, arguing against the heretics and especially against the Marcionites, criticises them because they do not distinguish the catechumens from the faithful, and give to all equal access to the mysteries, and allow the same participation in the prayers. And what seems to him to be especially reprehensible is that "even if pagans were to come in, they would cast the holy things to the dogs, and their pearls, which in fact are false ones, to swine."<sup>7</sup> At this date the catechumenate was already definitely organised. It was a time of penance, during which the *novicioli* practised renunciation, and "like little dogs which begin to see a little light," were progressively instructed concerning the divine mysteries.<sup>8</sup> The works in which Tertullian gives us this information belong to the time of his life as a priest, prior to his defection; they were written in the first years of the third century (200-206).

A little after this, about 217, we have the *Apostolic Tradition* of St. Hippolytus.<sup>9</sup> Dom Capelle, after Dom Connolly, has reconstituted the text of this work by comparing together the derivative versions, Arabian, Coptic, and Ethiopian, also the *Canons of Hippolytus*, the Latin version, and the *Testament of Our Lord*.

We need not go into all the details of this canonical legislation, but we must note in the first place that those only were admitted to the catechumenate who were free to dispose of themselves and

<sup>6</sup> See Bk. II, pp. 463-465.

<sup>7</sup> *De praescriptione*, xli, 2. Cf. D'Alès, *Théologie de Tertullien*, pp. 317-321.

<sup>8</sup> *De paenitentia*, vi, 1. Cf. *De baptismo*, 1 and xx; *De corona*, ii and iii.

<sup>9</sup> On this work, cf. *infra*, p. 744. The labours of Schwartz and Dom Connolly have restored this work to Hippolytus, leaving open, however, several critical and historical questions. The work was composed by Hippolytus during his schism; but as Dom Capelle (*op. cit.*, p. 133) remarks, Hippolytus "was conservative, and one of his main complaints against the lawful Pope was precisely that he had innovated. We can therefore conjecture that Hippolytus did not make many changes in the baptismal ritual he adopted." At the same time it must be added that Hippolytus seems to have been a very strict legislator, and it is possible that he imposed on the members of his little church more rigorous rules than those which were in force in the Roman Church.

were leading honourable lives. Slaves could be received only with the authorisation of their masters, and married people only if they were living together. Those who made images or pictures had to give up their trade, as also those employed in circus games, hunters, fishers, soldiers, drivers, priests of idols, astrologers, magicians, magistrates, prefects, diviners, interpreters of dreams, and makers of philtres or amulets,<sup>10</sup> and lastly schoolmasters as far as possible. These manifold interdictions show the extent to which paganism permeated public life, and what precautions the Church had to take in order to safeguard her children.

The duration of the catechumenate was fixed with precision: "Catechumens will spend three years in learning doctrine; but if the candidate is docile and well conducted, a determined period will not be applied to him, but one according to his conduct."<sup>11</sup> In addition, the catechumen had to be presented solemnly to the assembly of the faithful. These asked him why he desired the faith, and after hearing the testimonies of those who had brought him concerning his aptitude to understand the doctrine, questioned him on his life and his profession.<sup>12</sup> Another examination took place before baptism, dealing with the conduct of the neophyte during his catechumenate:

When the catechumens have been chosen or are ready for baptism, let their life be examined, to see if they have lived in the fear of God before baptism, if they have honoured widows, visited the sick, done good to all, and if those who present them give satisfactory testimony to this effect. If they have done this, they are to hear the Gospel from the time when they are chosen, and each day hands will be laid on

<sup>10</sup> Cf. *Canons of Hippolytus*, nn. 62-78.

<sup>11</sup> We read in Canon 91: "Catechumenus, qui dignus est lumine, non impedit eum tempus; doctor autem ecclesiae ille est, qui hanc quaestionem dijudicat." Yet the duration of three years is found also in the *Apostolic Constitutions*, VIII, xxxii, 16; at the Council of Elvira, canon 42 (two or three years), and in the *Testament of Our Lord*, ed. Rahmani, p. 117; cf. article, *Catéchuménat*, cols. 2583-4. It is everywhere admitted that good conduct may shorten the time of probation, and that bad conduct may prolong it. Origen (*Hom. 9 in Jesum Nave*, ix) urges his hearers to lessen the time of their novitiate by their good conduct.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Canons 60-62: "Illi qui ecclesiam frequentant eo consilio ut inter christianos recipiantur, examinentur omni cum perseverantia, et quam ob causam suum cultum respuant, ne forte intrent illudendi causa. Quod si vero aliquis in fide vera advenerit, recipiatur cum gaudio interrogeturque de officio, instruatque per diaconum discatque in ecclesia renuntiare satanae et pompae ejus toti. Hoc autem observetur omni tempore, quo instruitur, antequam cetero populo adnumeretur." On this presentation of the candidate, cf. art. *Catéchuménat*, col. 2581.



them and they will be instructed. When the day of their baptism approaches, the bishop shall make them take an oath,<sup>13</sup> to know if they are pure. And if one of them is found to be impure he shall be put aside by himself, because he has not received the doctrine with faith, and is not fit to receive baptism. . . . Those who are to be baptised will be warned that on the fifth day of the week they must wash and be exorcised; and if there be among them a woman in her menstrual period, she must be put aside to be baptised another day. Those who are to be baptised must fast on the Friday. On the Saturday the bishop will gather all those who are to be baptised, and bid them pray on their knees. And when he has imposed hands on them, he is to exorcise every impure spirit to flee away from them and never return. And when he has finished the exorcism, he is to breathe on them, and they are to hear a reading and an exhortation.<sup>14</sup>

This legislation reveals to us a catechumenate in which the two classes of catechumens, *audientes* and *competentes* (or *illuminati*) are already distinct; there is no question as yet of the *traditio symboli*.<sup>15</sup> But the catechumenate we find in these documents is already governed by a fairly detailed canonical legislation, and in this respect differs from the preparation for baptism explained to us by St. Justin.

### *The Liturgical Formulæ*

If we continue the study of the canonical documents which depend on the *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus, we find a liturgy of baptism and of the Eucharist which it is interesting to compare with the primitive liturgy.

In St. Clement, St. Polycarp, and St. Justin, the liturgical prayers

<sup>13</sup> Coptic: "The bishop exorcises them."

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Canons 102-111. This text differs only by a few details from that which we have followed. Canon 103: "Tunc confiteatur episcopo—huic enim soli de ipso est impositum onus—ut episcopus eum approbet dignumque habeat qui fruatur mysteriis" (instead of the oath or the exorcism). 110: "Postquam autem finivit adjurationes eorum, in facies eorum sufflet signetque pectora et frontes, aures et ora eorum. Ipsi autem tota illa nocte vigilias agant sacris sermonibus et orationibus occupati."

<sup>15</sup> Dom de Puniet, *op. cit.*, col. 2584: "There is no explicit allusion to the Apostles' Creed, still less to the liturgical act of the tradition of the creed. . . . It is certain . . . that the *Canons of Hippolytus* and the *Egyptian Constitutions* are completely ignorant of the *traditio symboli*. The Egyptians in any case never practised it, and we shall see later on that the Coptic and Abyssinian rituals have no trace of it. The same applies to the Roman usage of the *redditio symboli*: in the *Constitutions*, the formulæ of the symbol relate, in point of fact, to the *confessio fidei* at the baptism, which differed from the *redditio symboli*."

were arranged according to a traditional scheme, but they developed this freely. As Justin says when describing the Sunday Mass, "he who presides sends up to heaven prayers and eucharists, as well as he can, and all the people reply: Amen."

The documents which we are now studying have quite a different character. For the consecration of bishops, the ordinations of priests, deacons, confessors, lectors, subdeacons, widows, and virgins, they give definite formulæ which the ministers of the Church are to use. The same applies to the administration of baptism and the Eucharist,<sup>16</sup> and various blessings such as those of oil, cheese, and olives. We notice this final injunction: "In every blessing, say: 'To thee the glory, Father and Son, with the Holy Spirit, in the holy Church, now and for ever, Amen.'"<sup>17</sup>

In spite of the care he takes to give to his liturgy a fixed form, Hippolytus still bears witness to the previous usage, for in passing he gives to the celebrant the right to pray more or less at length according to his devotion.<sup>18</sup>

If we possessed only the documents arising from the *Apostolic Tradition*, we might interpret this canonical legislation as an enterprise on the part of the head of the little church at Rome. What gives it more importance in our eyes is the conservative tendency which Hippolytus manifests throughout his work, and in particular in the preface to the treatise, and again, the history of liturgical texts. Lietzmann has shown that all the liturgies we possess can be reduced to two types from which they have come, the liturgy of Hippolytus, and the liturgy of Serapion.<sup>19</sup> This being so, these

<sup>16</sup> Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 162 and 210.

<sup>17</sup> On this doxology, cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 622 et seq. This mention of the Church in the doxology is characteristic of Hippolytus (*Adversus haeresim Noeti*, xviii). We find it in several places in his liturgy. The imperative command reproduced above indicates something new and artificial; it is isolated in the history of liturgy, and disappears with the little church of Hippolytus.

<sup>18</sup> This text is rather difficult. It is absent from Canon 47, and is found in two different forms in the Ethiopian and the Coptic. It comes immediately after the rite of priestly ordination of a confessor. But, as Connolly (*op. cit.*, pp. 64 et seq.) has shown, it refers to the eucharistic liturgy. Here is the Coptic version: "The bishop will celebrate the eucharist, as we have said above. It is not absolutely necessary that he recite the words we have marked, as if reciting them by heart to God in his eucharist, but each will pray as he is able. If he is able to pray sufficiently well by formulating a long prayer, it is well; but if he prays and recites a prayer of restricted length, let no one prevent him, provided his prayer is quite orthodox." Cf. Connolly, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

<sup>19</sup> *Messe und Herrenmahl*, pp. 174 et seq.

two liturgies no longer appear to us as creations without a past and without a future: on the contrary, they were based on a firm tradition, and are the starting point of a new development. All this implies that this codified liturgy, the fruit of long usage, was henceforth imposed on the whole Church.

### *The Baptismal Creed*

What we have just said as to the Eucharistic liturgy is confirmed by the history of the baptismal rite, and in particular by the history of the Creed. We need not repeat here in detail a history which will be found in other works,<sup>20</sup> but only the conclusions. These are not without their interest in the subject we are now discussing. The baptismal creed is a liturgical formula, and the history of liturgy is best able to help us to determine its origin and development. As in the case of the eucharistic liturgy, we have here at the beginning a command of Christ, the order given to the apostles: "Go, teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"; this precept imposed the baptismal formula, and has given rise to the rule of faith.<sup>21</sup>

At first, this Trinitarian creed was very short; it was a liturgical formula which set forth the profession of faith of the neophytes, based on the baptismal formula. It expressed this at first very briefly, then more explicitly, as new questions arose, threatening the faith. As a result, the Church gradually defined the rule of faith, incorporating into the ancient Creed Christological formulæ already consecrated by liturgical usage.

In the first two centuries, this Creed still possessed its primitive plasticity; it could take various forms in opposition to heresies; and in one and the same theologian, in St. Irenæus for instance, it could have more than one expression.<sup>22</sup> Essentially, it consisted of a profession of faith in the three divine Persons; it also always contained the mysteries of the life of Christ. But this Christology was, in the *Adversus haereses*, attached to the third article of the Creed, while in the *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching* it

<sup>20</sup> Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 141-173; *Les origines du Symbole baptismal*, in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XX, 1930, pp. 97-124, and books and articles mentioned in these works.

<sup>21</sup> This origin is very clear in Tertullian, *De praescriptione*, xiii and xx.

<sup>22</sup> It suffices to compare *Adversus haereses*, I, x, 2, and *Demonstration*, vi, to realise this difference; cf. *Recherches*, art. mentioned, pp. 103 and 105.

belonged to the second article.<sup>23</sup> In addition, the materials were not only arranged in different ways, but they were also selected in a different manner. We recognise elements borrowed from a previous liturgical tradition, but these borrowed elements differ.<sup>24</sup>

When we pass from Irenæus to Tertullian and Hippolytus, we notice that liturgical usage has become more definite: from the two latter we can derive the same symbol, the Roman Creed.<sup>25</sup> This definite determination of the formula was probably the result of the Christological and Trinitarian heresies which towards the end of the second century troubled the whole Church, and especially the Roman Church.<sup>26</sup> It was greatly facilitated by the circumstances we have already mentioned: liturgical usage came to have an invariable form, sanctioned by the authority of the Church; the baptismal Creed was subject to this law.

This codification of the liturgy developed within particular churches; nevertheless the formulæ or rules adopted by one church generally spread through its sphere of influence, and that of Rome thus spread to Carthage and Africa. Beyond these churches linked to Rome by special bonds, the universal Church as a whole experienced the attraction of Rome and was subject to its authority. Nevertheless, liturgical usage enjoyed a wide autonomy; the codification we have found at Rome will take place also elsewhere, but more slowly, and following different patterns. But on one point, the determination of the date of Easter, Rome will insist on the unification of custom.<sup>27</sup>

### *The Canon of the New Testament*

The constitution of the canon of the New Testament was still more important than the codification of the liturgy. It was not

<sup>23</sup> Similarly in Tertullian we find the mention of the Holy Spirit or of the resurrection of the body attached to the Christology: *De praescript.*, xiii; *Adv. Praxeas*, ii; *De virg. vel.*, i.

<sup>24</sup> The passage in the *Demonstration*, vi, can be studied from this point of view; it is a brief commentary on the Creed rather than a literal transcription of it; but this commentary is composed of traditional formulæ, traces of which can be found in Barnabas, Justin, and Hippolytus. Cf. *Recherches*, art. quoted, p. 103, n. 10.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Dom B. Capelle, *Le Symbole romain au II<sup>e</sup> siècle*, in *Revue bénédictine*, Vol. XXXIX, 1927, pp. 33-44; Lietzmann, *Symbolstudien*, XIV, in *Zeitschr. f. N. T. Wiss.*, 1927, pp. 75-95; *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 162-168.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, p. 161; *Recherches*, art. cit., pp. 115 et seq.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. *infra*. p. 722.

entirely independent of the latter, and it resulted from the same influences: faced by the heretics, who borrowed from every source teaching in harmony with their particular ideas, the Church found it necessary to assure the purity of its faith, and hence to determine its sources with greater precision.<sup>28</sup>

This object is plain in St. Irenæus. It dominates his third book, in which the bishop of Lyons affirms with remarkable emphasis that there are and can be only four gospels. This reaction was necessary, for already at that time apocryphal writings were multiplying. It was at that time that Serapion, Bishop of Antioch, passing by the church of Rhossos on the Gulf of Issus, was given the *Gospel of Peter*, with which he was unacquainted. In order not to seem too severe, he allowed its reading, but subsequently, having read it himself, he was convinced that it was the work of Docetic heretics, and at once wrote to the faithful of Rhossos withdrawing the permission he had granted.<sup>29</sup> It was also at that time that apocryphal Acts of apostles were spreading: Tertullian narrates that the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* were composed by a priest who was consequently degraded;<sup>30</sup> if he was not condemned more severely, it was because these Acts were not heretical, and the priest in question protested that he had written them only through piety towards the apostle. Other writers, inspired by different motives, composed books which were heretical or at least suspect.<sup>31</sup>

Besides this doubtful literature consisting of gospels, acts and apocalypses, we find a frankly Gnostic literature springing up: the *Gospel of Mary Magdalene*, the *Revelation of John*, and *Pistis Sophia*;<sup>32</sup> and these books present themselves as revelations of the Lord entrusted by some chosen souls to a few initiates.

Amidst such great confusion, the Church had the duty of safeguarding souls and also of distinguishing between imaginative romances and works written under divine inspiration. From the first, she had set forth to Christians under her own guarantee the

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Lagrange, *Histoire ancienne du Canon du Nouveau Testament*, 1933, especially pp. 58-133.

<sup>29</sup> A fragment of this letter is quoted by Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xii, 3-6. Cf. Lagrange, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

<sup>30</sup> *De baptismo*, xvii. Cf. Vouaux, *Les Actes de Paul*, pp. 29-31.

<sup>31</sup> The apocryphal Acts are almost all contaminated by Docetic or Gnostic influences; it is often difficult to determine whether these influences affect the whole work or only certain portions inserted in an orthodox whole; cf. *infra*, Bk. IV, ch. xxv, § 1.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 119-122.

books inspired by God. It belonged to her now to repeat a teaching more than ever necessary, and to give it such force and clarity that there should be no room for misunderstanding.

Here again, the codification applied to liturgical usage prepared the way for the canonical determination of a list of the books of the New Testament. We know the passage of Justin concerning the Sunday Mass: "There are readings from the memoirs of the apostles and the writings of the prophets, as much as time permits."<sup>33</sup> A little earlier the same writer mentions that these memoirs are called "gospels."<sup>34</sup>

This usage of the public reading of sacred writings goes back to the apostles themselves. St. Paul, in sending his first epistle to the Thessalonians, requests that it should be read to all the brethren (v, 27); in the same way the letter to the Colossians was to be read at Colossae, then at Laodicea, and the letter to the Laodiceans at Colossae (*Col.* iv, 16).<sup>35</sup>

These public readings were, like the rest of the liturgy, subject to control and legislation by the Church; hence it was necessary that a canonical regulation should make known which were sacred books, to distinguish them from the rest.

Even private reading had to conform itself, so far as the choice of books was concerned, to the judgment of the Church. We have seen this in the case of the *Gospel of Peter*; we find it again in connection with the first versions of the New Testament. Towards the end of the second century, the Church, which had spread widely beyond the hellenic world, had to make known her sacred books to her new children, and to give them translations in their own languages. Already at that period we find Latin<sup>36</sup> and Syriac translations of the books of the New Testament,<sup>37</sup> and in the third

<sup>33</sup> *Apol.*, I, lxvii, 3.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, lxvi, 3.

<sup>35</sup> About 170, Dionysius of Corinth, writing to Soter, informs him that his letter had been read to the brethren on the Sunday, and would continue to be read, together with the first letter written by Clement (*Hist. eccles.*, IV, xxiii, 11). The public reading of a document was a mark of veneration, but not necessarily an indication of canonicity. Cf. Lagrange, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-22.

<sup>36</sup> The Scillitan martyrs (July 17th, 180) admitted in their interrogation that they possessed "venerandi libri legis divinae et epistolae Pauli apostoli viri iusti" (ed. by Robinson, *Texts and Studies*, I, 2, 1891). Tertullian utilises and sometimes discusses the Latin translations of several gospels or epistles. Cf. D'Alès, *Théologie de Tertullien*, pp. 232 et seq.

<sup>37</sup> The *Diatessaron* of Tatian was composed, probably in Greek, shortly after 170, and at once translated by its author into Syriac. Cf. A. S. Marmardjii, O.P., *Diatessaron de Tatien* (Beyrouth, 1935), p. ix: "It is sufficiently clear to-day that

century, Coptic versions appear.<sup>38</sup> This fact itself testifies to the existence of an already constituted collection of books.<sup>39</sup> This is particularly noticeable in the case of the four gospels: about 170 the harmony made by Tatian presupposed what St. Irenæus was to establish ten years later so forcibly: there are four gospels, and only four.

To all these causes we must also add the controversies provoked by heresy. Marcion rejected the whole of the Old Testament; of the New he retained only the Gospel of St. Luke in a mutilated form, and the epistles of St. Paul. Here was a first point to be debated with him, and in fact it dominated the whole controversy. On the other hand, the Montanist misuse of the Johannine *Apocalypse* and of the Sermon after the Last Supper had led to an extreme reaction, and caused in certain circles an attitude of mistrust towards the *Apocalypse*, and even towards the Johannine gospel.<sup>40</sup>

This codification of the Canon was clearly not the work of one man: it was but the confirmation by the Church of the judgment she had passed from the beginning on the sacred books; in view of the various circumstances we have mentioned such confirmation had become indispensable. In the case of the majority of the books the Church gave this confirmation without hesitation: the four Gospels, the *Acts*, and the Epistles of St. Paul were received in the whole church without controversy. The *Apocalypse* was sometimes called in question by reason of the anti-Montanist and anti-Millenarianist reactions; the epistle to the Hebrews and the Catholic epistles were the subject of doubts concerning their origin, and were received only after a fairly long discussion.<sup>41</sup>

On the other hand, we find in the second century certain churches receiving with favour books without authority. We have

Tatian began by composing his *Diatessaron* in Greek . . . and that he then translated it into Syriac. . . . It was, strictly speaking, a Syriac work for Syrians."

<sup>38</sup> The Sahidic version may belong to the end of the third century or the beginning of the fourth: Lagrange, *Critique textuelle du N.T.*, II (Paris, 1935), pp. 322-324.

<sup>39</sup> The publication of the Chester-Beatty papyrus has shown that from the first half of the third century the New Testament writings were in the hands of Christians, and collected in a codex. *Chester-Beatty Biblical Papyri*, London, 1933, Introduction, p. 12.

<sup>40</sup> On all this, cf. Kidd, *History of the Church*, Vol. I, pp. 268-272.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Lagrange, *op. cit.*, pp. 130-133, where he sums up the conclusions of his enquiry.

seen an instance in the case of Serapion of Antioch, who first allowed and then set aside the *Gospel of Peter*. The *Shepherd* of Hermas, speedily rejected by the Western churches, retained its favour for a long time in Egypt.<sup>42</sup>

These local and temporary hesitations obscured the question of the Canon and made its outlines somewhat doubtful. But in the centre the light was clear, and was never dimmed. We find moreover on this matter of the Canon of the Scriptures what we have already found in other matters, such as the baptismal creed: it was at Rome in the first place that the legislative work was formulated, to spread from thence throughout the whole Church.

For it is a fact that the first known catalogue of the sacred books emanates from Rome at the beginning of the third century,<sup>43</sup> in the shape of the *Muratorian Fragment*.<sup>44</sup> Did this text emanate from Hippolytus? Many historians think so, and not without reason.<sup>45</sup> At the same time, the question of its author is here a secondary one: what is more important is the character of the document. Harnack describes it thus: <sup>46</sup> "This *Fragment* is a work of authority; it was destined to direct all Christendom, and to give it an example to be followed; it was very likely of Roman origin." And he concludes: "With its apodeictic phrases and its final judgment on Hermas, it has no parallel in the early Church other than the excommunication of Theodotus from the Catholic Church by Victor, the exclusion of the Asiatics from Catholic unity by the same Victor, the dogmatic declaration by Zephyrinus in favour of Unitarianism,<sup>47</sup> and the peremptory edict of Callistus on penance.

<sup>42</sup> Origen (*Comment. in Mt.* xiv, 21) regards it as Divine Scripture, but confesses that his opinion is not held by the whole Church, and does not claim to impose it. Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, p. 346 *et seq.*

<sup>43</sup> Zahn (*Geschichte des N.T. Kanons*, Vol. II, p. 136) puts the *Fragment* a little before 217; Kidd (*op. cit.*, p. 272) dates it between 175 and 200.

<sup>44</sup> The text of this *Fragment* is in Zahn, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 5-8, in Lagrange, *op. cit.*, pp. 68-70, in Schumacher's *Handbook of Scripture Study*, 1923, Vol. I, and in other manuals. The most detailed commentaries are those of Zahn (*ibid.*, pp. 1-143) and Lagrange, *ibid.*, pp. 70-84.

<sup>45</sup> Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, Vol. I, 2, pp. 405 *et seq.*; Robinson, in *Expositor*, Vol. I, 1906, pp. 481 *et seq.*; Zahn, *Komment. zur Offenbarung Joh.*, 1924, p. 106; Bonwetsch, *Nachr. d. Ges. d. Wiss. z. Goett.*, June 7th, 1923; Lagrange, *op. cit.*, pp. 78-84.

<sup>46</sup> *Zeitschrift für N.T. Wissenschaft*, Vol. XXIV, 1925, pp. 1-16. In this article Harnack rejects the attribution of this work to Hippolytus.

<sup>47</sup> The reader will make the reservations called for by this interpretation of the declaration by Zephyrinus, who was completely orthodox and in no wise approved Unitarianism.



Hence we shall have to give to the bishop of Rome a greater part in the creation or confirmation of the New Testament than has been given hitherto." This opinion of Harnack has traces of the author's bias against the bishops of Rome, whom he accuses of Monarchianism, but it is not all wrong: the *Muratorian Fragment* is, in its way, a peremptory edict like that of Callistus which we shall soon have to examine.

### *The Apostolic Succession*

After the Bible, the other source of the faith is Tradition. When Irenæus undertook the task of determining and safeguarding the sources of doctrine, he dealt with both these domains, equally invaded by the Gnostics.<sup>48</sup> From the beginning of the second century, and in greater measure as the doctrinal controversies multiplied, the apostolic teaching was examined as a criterion of truth. The Gnostics themselves appealed to it: they did so by mutilating the Scriptures, doing violence to them by their exegesis, putting forth works under the cover of apostolic authority, and also by the idea of a secret tradition through which the apostolic teaching had come down to themselves.

This tradition was sometimes put under the guarantee of a real or fictitious disciple of the apostles or of the Lord: thus Basilides, according to Clement,<sup>49</sup> appealed to Glaucias, who was, in his view, a disciple of St. Peter. According to Hippolytus,<sup>50</sup> Basilides and his son Isidore claimed that Matthias had communicated to them secret discourses which he had himself received from the Saviour in confidential communications.<sup>51</sup>

At other times the supposed authors of this revelation were not named, and people contented themselves with invoking a secret

<sup>48</sup> Irenæus, *Adversus haereses*, III, ii, 1-2, quoted above, p. 675-676.

<sup>49</sup> *Strom.*, VII, xvii.

<sup>50</sup> *Philos.*, VII, xx, 1.

<sup>51</sup> We occasionally find similar legends in Clement of Alexandria, who did not keep himself quite free from Gnostic influences on this matter of Tradition. Thus, in *Hypotyposes*, fr. 13 (Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, II, 1, 4), we read: "After the resurrection, the Lord transmitted the gnosis to James the Just, to John and to Peter; these transmitted it to the other apostles, and to the seventy disciples, one of whom was Barnabas." Again, we find this secret tradition prominent in the *Clementine Homilies* in the letter from Peter to James, and in the solemn promise exacted by James from all those who receive from him the teaching of Peter.

tradition, coming from the Lord;<sup>52</sup> but in this case also the Gnostics affirmed that the first link in the chain was an apostle.<sup>53</sup>

### *The Catholic Tradition*

Against these Gnostic theses we have the Catholic doctrine of Tradition, as elaborated by St. Irenæus,<sup>54</sup> and transmitted to Tertullian. To convict slippery opponents of error, it was necessary to establish the existence of an incontestable and universally recognised tradition. Irenæus found its guarantee in the succession of bishops who through their origin were linked up legitimately with the apostles, and through the apostles with Christ. Already in the year 95, Clement established the authority of the Catholic hierarchy by the origin of the episcopal succession; the same argument guaranteed for Irenæus the divine origin and consequently the certainty of the Church's teaching:

The Tradition of the apostles is manifest in the whole world; whosoever wishes to find the truth has only to examine it in every church. We can enumerate the bishops who have been instituted by the apostles and by their successors down to our own time (III, iii, 1).

Tertullian will say the same thing, in addressing the heretics:

Show us the origin of your churches, unfold the series of your bishops in succession from the beginning, in such a way that the first bishop had as guarantor and predecessor one of the apostles, or one of the apostolic men who remained to the end in communion with the apostles. For that is how the apostolic churches set forth their records. . . .<sup>55</sup>

<sup>52</sup> Thus in the Naassene hymn: "I will teach the secrets of the holy way, that is, the gnosis" (*Philos.*, V, x, 2), and in the letter from Ptolemy to Flora: "When she shall be judged worthy of the apostolic tradition, which we ourselves have received also through succession, with the rule that we are to measure all our words by the doctrine of the Saviour."

<sup>53</sup> This secret and anonymous tradition is also found in the Alexandrian theology, at least in Clement. In Origen we notice more reserve: he certainly admits secret revelations received by St. Paul and transmitted by him confidentially to Luke or Timothy, but he does not say that these revelations were transmitted in secret down to his own day.

<sup>54</sup> This doctrine has been recently studied by D. B. Reynnders, *Paradosis, Le progrès de l'idée de tradition jusqu'à saint Irénée*, in *Recherches de Théologie*, Vol. V, 1933, pp. 155-191, and by Père Van den Eynde, *Les Normes de l'enseignement chrétien* pp. 159-192.

<sup>55</sup> *De praescriptione*, xxxii.

This argument implies the existence of episcopal lists which enabled the various churches, or at least the apostolic churches, to give proof of their origin. The best example is the episcopal list for Rome, transcribed by Irenæus in support of his thesis (III, iv, 1). Such lists have in the present question a twofold interest for us: they show the care taken by the churches, already before Irenæus, to establish the succession of their bishops, and thereby their apostolic origin. At the same time, these lists were not as yet dated, with the duration of each episcopate, so that subsequently, in order to satisfy a legitimate historical curiosity, efforts were made to supply these absent indications by means of conjectures.<sup>56</sup> The period with which we are dealing was still so close to the beginnings that no need was felt of such reckonings; the only question which arose and which received a peremptory reply was that of the legitimate succession of the bishops, as a guarantee of apostolic origin. The episcopal records will later on constitute the framework for ecclesiastical history, but at first they were only genealogies which linked up the bishops of the apostolic sees with the apostolic founders.

It is in this way that we find, thirty years before Irenæus, the episcopal succession set forth. Hegesippus did his best to determine it in the churches he visited, and especially that of Rome;<sup>57</sup> and it was this succession which about the same period formed the basis of the argument of Anicetus against Polycarp in the Easter controversy.<sup>58</sup>

Thus Irenæus did not have to create the argument from Tradition through episcopal succession; he had only to collect together the material, but in doing so he gave to the argument a more evident force. The whole matter was set forth by Tertullian in a vigorous summary:

It is therefore well established that every doctrine in agreement with these churches, the matrices and sources of the faith, must be regarded as true, since it constitutes, without room for doubt, that which these

<sup>56</sup> This character of the early episcopal lists has been well established by E. Caspar, *Die älteste römische Bischofsliste*, in *Schriften der Königsberger Gelehrten Gesellschaft*, Vol. II, 4, 1926; cf. Van den Eynde, *op. cit.*, pp. 193-195.

<sup>57</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, IV, xxii, 2-3. Cf. Van den Eynde, *op. cit.*, pp. 72-75.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, V, xxiv, 16: Polycarp, the immediate disciple of St. John and the other apostles, appealed to these; Anicetus to the presbyters who had preceded him. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 75.

churches received from the apostles, the apostles from Christ, and Christ from God.<sup>59</sup>

We may add that the argument of Irenæus, more complete than that of Tertullian, always brings out the twofold aspect of Tradition: not only the perpetuity of the testimony which by the regular succession of bishops goes back to the apostles and to Christ, but also the fact that it implies a living chain, and a testimony of the Spirit which guarantees and ensures our union with Christ, not only by faithful adhesion to his doctrine but also by sharing in his life.<sup>60</sup>

Thus, Tradition is a source of truth and of life open to all. To draw from it there is no need of a secret initiation or of learned researches; it suffices to have recourse to the churches, and by preference to those which are the most ancient, those in which the apostles lived, and above all, "the greatest and most ancient, known by all, founded and established at Rome by the two most glorious apostles Peter and Paul."<sup>61</sup>

### *Penitential Discipline*

In the course of the first half of the third century, penitential discipline received a character it had not previously possessed: the reconciliation of sinners was henceforth governed by canonical laws which hitherto had not been formulated. This transformation presents an obvious analogy with those we have found in the history of the liturgy, the formation of the Canon of the New Testament, and the elaboration of the concept of Tradition. Here, as in these other domains, the Church tightened its system and defined its jurisprudence: law took the place of custom.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>59</sup> *De praescriptiōe*, xxi, 4.

<sup>60</sup> We notice this especially when he is invoking the witness of the churches established amongst the barbarians: "These faithful ones of Christ have neither paper nor ink, but salvation has been written in their hearts by the Spirit, and they diligently keep the old tradition concerning it" (*Adversus haereses*, III, iv, 2); and more explicitly when he describes the vivifying force of the Church's teaching (*ibid.*, III, xxiv, 1). Cf. *supra*, pp. 675-679.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, III, iii, 2. In all this development of the idea of Tradition within the Church, we find no trace of what Caspar thinks was its origin, i.e., a scholastic tradition analogous to that of the philosophical sects, in which teaching was transmitted from master to disciple. Cf. *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XXI, 1931, p. 604.

<sup>62</sup> Our whole aim here is to study this transformation, not to describe in detail the attitude of the Church towards sinners. That would involve a lengthy dis-

To understand the whole significance of this transformation, it is useful to recall the *Shepherd* of Hermas and its preaching of penance. To the sinners who have not been able to remain in grace, signified by the green branch of their baptism, Hermas protests that their collapse is unworthy in Christians, and that baptism ought to be for all the one sole and definitive penance. In future that will be the case, but for the past God is willing still to forgive, and the angel of penance offers salvation to sinners. In all this preaching we recognise the endeavour of a fervent Christian to maintain the Christian ideal in all its purity without, however, casting sinners into despair. There is no question here of the promulgation of a "jubilee": the grace offered once but then neglected will be offered once more, though there is no call for this repeated offering of an exceptional grace, and it will never happen again. Above all, this grace consists, not in the promulgation of an edict of indulgence, but in an exhortation made by a Christian prophet.<sup>63</sup> Such an exhortation might well be beneficial, but clearly it could not suffice to solve this grave moral problem: in order to recover the lost grace and the hope of salvation, it is necessary to return to the tower, that is to say, the Church; only the Church can grant or refuse this return; the preaching of Hermas implies that the Church will be merciful, but it cannot give an authoritative assurance of it or determine the conditions.

We know little concerning these conditions. The preaching of Hermas, and later the treatise on penance written by Tertullian when still a Catholic, testify to the part played by the Church in the reconciliation of sinners;<sup>64</sup> these indications are confirmed by some facts which we occasionally find, such as the reconciliation of Marcion,<sup>65</sup> and the exomologesis of heretical women and sinners

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cussion, which may be found in the works of some very careful and judicious historians: A. d'Alès, *L'Edit de Calliste*, 1914; P. Galtier, *L'Eglise et la rémission des péchés aux premiers siècles*, 1932. Cf. C. D. Watkins, *History of Penance*, London, 1920, 2 vols., Vol. I, pp. 109-129.

<sup>63</sup> Turner has suggested that this preaching by Hermas, brother of Pius the bishop, aimed at upholding the episcopal authority through the credit of the prophet (*Journal of Theological Studies*, Vol. XXI, 1920, pp. 193-194). This hypothesis has nothing definite against it, but it is quite gratuitous: there is no indication in the *Shepherd* of an act of authority on the part of the bishop which the prophet wishes to uphold.

<sup>64</sup> This fact, of very great importance, has been well established by P. d'Alès, *L'Edit de Calliste*, pp. 52-113 (for Hermas); pp. 137-171 (for the *De paenitentia*).

<sup>65</sup> Cf. D'Alès, *op. cit.*, pp. 120 *et seq.*

mentioned by St. Irenæus.<sup>66</sup> But what we do not find at this time is a canonical law promising the sinner, under certain conditions, reconciliation with the Church and absolution in God's name.<sup>67</sup>

### *The Edict of Callistus*

On the other hand, all this appears in full light in the peremptory edict of which Tertullian complained when he had become a Montanist: "The Sovereign Pontiff, otherwise called the bishop of bishops, issues an edict: 'I remit the sins of adultery and fornication to those who have done penance.'"<sup>68</sup>

This "peremptory edict," as Tertullian calls it, was certainly the work of a bishop, and very probably the work of the bishop of Rome, Hippolytus's adversary, Callistus.<sup>69</sup>

### *Tertullian*

The *Philosophumena* were composed by Hippolytus only after the death of Callistus; the *De Pudicitia*, on the other hand, was

<sup>66</sup> *Adversus haereses*, I, vi, 3; I, xiii, 5. *Ibid.*, p. 121.

<sup>67</sup> Without attempting to decide so obscure a question, it is permissible to think, in accordance with what we know about the ecclesiastical discipline and liturgy of that time, that the bishops settled the cases which presented themselves on the lines of traditional custom, and not according to a formally defined canonical legislation.

<sup>68</sup> *De pudicitia*, I, 6.

<sup>69</sup> This question has often been discussed. P. de Labriolle mentions it (Introduction to the *De pudicitia*, xvii): "From the time of the first editors of Tertullian, the hypothesis generally accepted was that Pope Zephyrinus was referred to. A few critics also thought that a Carthaginian bishop might be meant. But the discovery of the *Philosophumena* has reopened the question." De Rossi tried to show that Callistus was the author of the edict; he was followed by Harnack and "the great majority of the critics." In more recent years, the hypothesis of the African origin of the edict has been adopted by a fair number of critics, who attribute it to Agrippinus; thus P. Galtier (*La véritable Edit de Calliste*, article published in 1927 in the *Revue d'Histoire ecclésiastique*, Vol. XXIII, pp. 465-488; and again in *L'Eglise et la rémission des péchés*, 1932, pp. 141-183); G. Bardy (*L'Edit d'Agrippinus*, in *Revue des Sciences religieuses*, Vol. IV, 1924, pp. 1-25), and some others mentioned by Galtier. Many others, however, continue to recognise Callistus as the author of the edict: thus Harnack, *Ecclesia Petri propinqua*, in *Sitzungsberichte der preuss. Akad.*, Berlin, Vol. XVIII, 1927; Batiffol, in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XVII, 1928, p. 38; D'Alès, Vol. XI, 1920, p. 254; H. Koch, *Kallist und Tertullian*, Heidelberg, 1920; *Cathedra Petri*, 1930, p. 6; Caspar, *Geschichte des Papsttums*, Vol. I, p. 26; Kidd, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 374. The question, however, is not of great importance in the study of disciplinary development; whether the edict was published at Rome by Callistus or at Carthage by Agrippinus, it marks in any case the exercise of episcopal power acting in a peremptory and supreme manner (cf. Galtier, *op. cit.*, p. 147).

written between 217 and 222 by Tertullian when he had become a Montanist: it was the first reaction of the fierce controversialist against the "peremptory edict," as he calls it. Previously, when he had belonged to the Church, Tertullian himself taught that she could forgive these sins. Now he has changed his view, and boasts of having done so:

Let the psychicals make use of this to accuse me still more of inconsistency. To break with a crowd has never constituted a presumption of sin. As if one had not more chances of erring with the crowd, for truth is loved only by an élite! I shall not draw upon myself more dishonour through a profitable inconstancy than I would derive of glory from a harmful inconstancy. I am not shamed by the error which I have renounced, because I am delighted that I have renounced it, and I realise that I am better and more chaste. No one is ashamed to make progress.<sup>70</sup>

Doubtless Tertullian still admitted that God could forgive sins, but he denied that this power had been imparted to the Church. Consequently, whoever has been guilty of the three sins which he regards as unforgivable—fornication, homicide and apostasy—must do penance for them, but look for pardon from God alone:

Penance remains sterile (for the psychicals), in whom it obtains only a human peace. With us, on the contrary, who remember that the Lord alone forgives faults, and hence also mortal faults, it is profitable. For, delivered into the hands of God, and henceforth prostrate before Him, the soul will labour the more efficaciously for its pardon because she implores it from God alone, and does not believe that a human peace is sufficient for her fault, and prefers to blush before the Church rather than return into communion with her. Seated before her doors, she instructs others by the example of her opprobrium, she calls to her aid the tears of her brethren, and returns richer because of their pity than she would be through a restored communion. And if she reaps less here below, she is sowing more with the Lord.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>70</sup> i, 10-11. On the significance of this admission, cf. D'Alès, *op. cit.*, pp. 178-183. A comparison of the *De paenitentia*, written by Tertullian when still a Catholic, with the *De pudicitia*, confirms these statements. "In the *De pudicitia*, Tertullian takes sides against the Catholic doctrine of his time. And he shows us with full evidence that this doctrine, against which he protests, is the same as he had himself set forth in the *De paenitentia*" (p. 180).

<sup>71</sup> iii, 3-5. Later on Tertullian attributes to the Church the power to forgive sins, but this time it is the Montanist church; and he also adds that the Church refuses to take advantage of her power, in order not to encourage sinners (xxi, 7).

## Hippolytus

Of the disciplinary work of Callistus, Tertullian mentions only one feature: the edict promising absolution after due penance, to Christians who had committed adultery and fornication. Hippolytus gives a much more complete picture, but is equally vehement: <sup>72</sup> "Callistus was the first to undertake to authorise pleasure, saying that he would forgive sins to all the world; sinners flocked together and filled his school. He said that a bishop, even if he had fallen into a great sin, could not be deposed; he based himself on the words of St. Paul: 'Who are you, to judge the servant of another?'" <sup>73</sup> He allowed women to contract marriage with men of a lower condition, and even with slaves, without having recourse to legal marriage. "Thereupon, one saw women who call themselves faithful use all kinds of means to destroy before their term the children they had conceived, whether by a slave or by a husband unworthy of them; their rank and fortune made this necessary. And thus Callistus inculcated at one and the same time concubinage and infanticide. . . . In his days, for the first time, those belonging to his party dared to allow a second baptism. Such was the work of the famous Callistus!"

It is difficult to distinguish in this diatribe the elements of truth it may contain. The easiest case to explain is that of unsuitable marriages; the Roman legislation and in particular the *senatus-consultus* of Marcus Aurelius and Commodus forbade these unions.<sup>74</sup> But there was a grave reason for evading this interdiction: in the Roman aristocracy conversions were rare, especially amongst men; Christian women might therefore ask the Church to sanction marriages which the civil law did not recognise, and the Church had the right to do this.<sup>75</sup> These authorisations, required by the common good, might nevertheless have dangerous consequences: these women, becoming mothers, might be tempted to procure abortion to hide their unsuitable marriage. If such a case did in

<sup>72</sup> *Philosophumena*, IX, xii. This text has been translated and studied by D'Alès, *op. cit.*, pp. 217 *et seq.*

<sup>73</sup> *Rom.* xiv, 4. Callistus is said to have admitted into the clergy bishops, priests and deacons who had been married twice and even three times; he even retained in his position a cleric who subsequently married.

<sup>74</sup> Texts given by Duchesne, *Origines chrétiennes*, p. 297.

<sup>75</sup> An inscription published by De Rossi, *Bull.*, 1881, p. 67, and recalled by Duchesne (*op. cit.*, p. 298, n.) mentions a certain well-known lady married to one who was a slave or a freedman.



fact happen, and if Callistus gave absolution to the guilty mother, this would show that he claimed to have the power to remit the sin of homicide, just as he remitted the sins of the flesh.<sup>76</sup>

His conduct towards bigamous or sinful clerics and bishops<sup>77</sup> is difficult to determine; <sup>78</sup> the text of St. Paul which he invoked and which is also mentioned by Tertullian<sup>79</sup> may have been wrongly used, but also it may have been legitimately invoked against agitators or jealous persons who sought to quarrel with their bishop.<sup>80</sup>

The question of "second baptism" is still more obscure. There can be no question here of a baptism conferred by Callistus on heretics previously baptised in their own sect and subsequently coming to him: the position taken thirty years later by St. Stephen in the matter of heretical baptisms and the argument which he based on the constant tradition of the Church, rule out the possibility that St. Callistus adopted on this matter the contrary practice. The most likely explanation of this text is the one which sees in this second baptism a solemn absolution given by the Church to the sinners it reconciled.<sup>81</sup>

### *Attitude of St. Callistus*

In spite of the doubts raised by an impassioned accusation like that of Hippolytus, and the difficulty we find in unravelling the historic facts which it exaggerated and misrepresented, it seems possible to infer by means of these calumnies the real attitude of St. Callistus. His pontificate (217-222) coincided with the reign of Elagabalus and the first months of that of Alexander Severus. During those five years we know of no violent persecution;<sup>82</sup> it was

<sup>76</sup> It is obviously to sins of the flesh that the beginning of the accusation refers, and here the testimony of Hippolytus confirms that of Tertullian.

<sup>77</sup> The reference is to bishops who had been married twice or thrice before their consecration, and hence (I Tim. iii, 2) ought not to be raised to the episcopate.

<sup>78</sup> Tertullian mentions that bigamous clerics had been removed (*De exhortatione castitatis*, vii), but elsewhere he complains of the impunity enjoyed by certain scandalous bishops (*De monogamia*, xii). Cf. D'Alès, *op. cit.*, p. 224, n. 1; Duchesne, *op. cit.*, p. 296.

<sup>79</sup> *De jejuniis*, xv; *De pudicitia*, ii.

<sup>80</sup> St. Cyprian and many others suffered much from calumnious accusations.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. De Rossi, in *Bolletino di Archeologia Cristiana*, 1866, p. 30; Benson, *Cyprian*, London, 1897, p. 336; D'Alès, *La théologie de saint Hippolyte*, pp. 63-64; *L'Edit de Calliste*, p. 226.

<sup>82</sup> It is possible that Callistus perished as a victim of a riot. Cf. Duchesne, *Histoire ancienne de l'Eglise*, Vol. I, p. 320.

for the Church a time of peace and of rapid propagation. In these circumstances one can understand that the penitential legislation of the bishop of Rome did not have to provide for the reconciliation of apostates.<sup>83</sup> The problem would become a very thorny one thirty years later, after the persecution by Decius. But at the time of which we are writing it was not so pressing. Apostates were doubtless very rare, but sinners were more numerous, and the cases of conscience they presented had to be solved. In deciding them in the way we have seen, Callistus, in our view, did but sanction by canonical legislation measures taken by the Church before his time, but this sanction was in fact of great importance. For the pardon which the *Shepherd* described as an exceptional measure was from now on approved by official edicts of the bishop of Rome. We can understand that in approving with his authority such grave measures, Callistus may have thought it desirable to justify them by an appeal to Scriptural texts: one must tolerate the tares in the field of the householder; the Church is like the ark of Noe, having within itself pure and impure animals.<sup>84</sup> This courageous and necessary initiative will, after the persecutions of Decius and Valerian, be extended to the case of repentant apostates, but this new indulgence will lead to new resistance and to new schisms.

### *The Didascalia*

The *Didascalia Apostolorum*,<sup>85</sup> later than the episcopate of Callistus but seemingly before the persecution of Decius, does not refuse to any sinner the Church's mercy and reconciliation. It of course strongly emphasises the Christian ideal: baptism should be the one penance: "Notum est omnibus quod, si quis peccaverit iniquum aliquid post baptismum, hic in gehenna condemnatur" (ch. V). But it instructs the bishop to reconcile all repentant sinners, even idolators, murderers<sup>86</sup> and adulterers.<sup>87</sup>

<sup>83</sup> Kidd (*op. cit.*, p. 375) thinks that Callistus dealt with all sins, including idolatry, in one and the same way. This is a legitimate interpretation of the text of Hippolytus, but there is nothing to prove that this text must be taken literally.

<sup>84</sup> These Scriptural references are said by Hippolytus to have been invoked by Callistus.

<sup>85</sup> *Didascalia Apostolorum*, ed. H. Connolly, Oxford, 1929.

<sup>86</sup> After quoting the Prayer of Manasses, it comments as follows: "Audistis, filioli dilectissimi nobis, quomodo Dominus pessime ei qui idolatra fuit et in-

The bishop is indeed put in the Church as a judge established by God and given the power of binding and loosing: "In Ecclesia sede verbum faciens, quasi potestatem habens judicare pro Deo eos qui peccaverunt: quoniam vobis episcopis dictum est per evangelium: Quodcumque ligaveritis super terram, erit ligatum et in caelo" (*ibid.*).<sup>88</sup> Hence he has a heavenly authority; he must be loved as a father, feared as a king, and honoured as God.<sup>89</sup>

But his high authority involves very grave duties for him, particularly in regard to sinners, whom he must seek out and save, "as the Lord Jesus Christ our good Master and Saviour said: 'Leave the ninety-nine on the mountains, and go and seek the lost sheep'" (ch. VII). These exhortations are pressing, especially in ch. VI and VII; the writer does not weary of citing the texts of the prophets and the Gospel which indicate to pastors their duty to be merciful.<sup>90</sup> These instructions are very interesting, not only because of the penitential discipline they explain, but also because of the pastoral ideal they describe. We find here once more the maternal love of the Church for her children, as it appeared, for instance, in the *Shepherd* of Hermas,<sup>91</sup> but the Church is personified in the bishop, the father and pastor of Christians.<sup>92</sup>

nocentes interfecit, et penituit, remisit, id est Manasseti, praesertim cum pejore peccatum non sit aliud idolatriae. Sed locus paenitentiae concessus est" (ch. viii).

<sup>87</sup> The writer mentions the pardon of the adulterous woman, and adds: "Si autem paenitentem, cum sis sine misericordia, non susciperis, peccavis in Dominum Deum; quoniam non es persuasus nec credidisti salvatori Deo nostro, ut faceres sicut ille fecit in ea muliere quae peccaverat, quam statuerunt presbyteri ante eum, et in eo ponentes iudicium exierunt . . ." (*ibid.*).

<sup>88</sup> We find the same conception of the duties of a bishop, and the same affirmation of his power to absolve, in the formula for episcopal consecration in St. Hippolytus. Cf. *infra*, p. 746.

<sup>89</sup> "Ille quidem qui diademam portat rex, corporis solius regnat, super terram solum solvens aut ligans. Episcopus autem et animae et corporis regnat, ligans et solvens super terram caelestis potestate: magna enim et caelestis et deifica data est ei potestas. Episcopum ergo diligite ut patrem, timete sicuti regem, honorate ut Deum" (ch. ix).

<sup>90</sup> Many of these texts are given by D'Alès, *L'Edit de Calliste*, pp. 360-364.

<sup>91</sup> Particularly in Vision III, ix, 1: "Listen to me, my children: I have brought you up in a great simplicity, innocence and holiness, through the mercy of the Lord who has made justice fall upon you drop by drop. . . ."

<sup>92</sup> This sentiment is frequently expressed in the documents of the anti-Novatian controversy, and for instance in this fragment of St. Dionysius of Alexandria (ed. Feltoe, p. 63): "We do the contrary (of what Christ does): He, who is good, goes into the mountains to seek for the wandering sheep, He calls it when it goes away, and having found it with great trouble, He brings it back on his shoulders; but we, when we see the sheep coming to us, brutally chase it away with kicks."

## *Catholic Unity*

In the preceding pages we have described the development of ecclesiastical discipline in the framework of the local communities; if we study the relations between the communities we find a parallel development of the chief organs of Church government.<sup>93</sup>

We must repeat here what Batiffol wrote more than thirty years ago, at the end of his excellent work *Primitive Catholicism*.<sup>94</sup>

The rapidity with which Christianity was propagated during the first three centuries, and that under the pressure of the imperial persecutions, is not then the only fact that should make the historian wonder: the internal and organic development of Christianity is still more wonderful. Far from being, as is claimed by Protestant historians, a series of crises and transformations that could only have brought forth differentiations and dislocations, Christendom shows itself to be a catholicity, a unity, a homogeneity; it is such in the year 200, and in the year 250, after an existence of two centuries.

In all this canonical, liturgical and administrative work which we have briefly outlined, we see the efforts of men endowed with a prudent moderation, charity, mutual regard, and a desire for unity. The bishops received from the apostles the power to teach and to govern, but at the same time also the grace of the Holy Spirit; they had the right to bind and to loose, but also a paternal instinct, and a solicitude for all Christians which made them tender towards all faults, and accessible to all sinners. Charged with the burden of the churches, these bishops, and above all the bishop of Rome, had an immense responsibility, and felt the weight of it; a few among them, such as Polycrates and Cyprian, might misunderstand the traditions which they had to keep, but these conflicts, which seemed likely to split the Church, calmed down in charity. All around, the sects broke up into fragments almost as soon as they arose; Marcionism itself, which kept so rigid a framework of hierarchical organisation, had split up by the end of the second century into rival confessions. The Catholic Church expanded from day to day, and at the same time tightened up its unity. St. Irenæus, a witness to this intense life, explains its mystery thus: "Just as without water one cannot make one single mass with grains of

<sup>93</sup> See Bk. IV, ch. xxx and xxxi.

<sup>94</sup> *Primitive Catholicism*, p. 411.

wheat, or one single loaf, so we would not have been able to become one single body in Christ Jesus without this heavenly water (of the Holy Spirit). And just as the dry earth bears no fruit if it be not watered, so we, who were dry wood, would never have borne living fruit without this rain from above.”<sup>95</sup>

<sup>95</sup> *Adversus haereses*, III, xvii, 2.

## CHAPTER XVII

# THE ROMAN CONTROVERSIES AT THE END OF THE SECOND AND BEGINNING OF THE THIRD CENTURIES

### § I. THE EASTER CONTROVERSY<sup>1</sup>

#### *Anicetus's Interview with Polycarp*

AT THE end of the second century, there was everywhere an effort to unify and codify the customs of the Church. This tendency manifested itself not only in the individual life of the various churches but also in the relations linking these churches with each other and subordinating them to the Roman Church. It is not our purpose to follow here in detail the progress of this concentration of Christian forces,<sup>2</sup> but the study of liturgical institutions has already introduced us to a grave controversy with which we must now deal, for it brought out into relief the bonds of dependence which ensure the unity of the Catholic Church.

In our outline of the life of St. Polycarp,<sup>3</sup> we mentioned, following St. Irenæus,<sup>4</sup> the voyage which the old Bishop of Smyrna made to Rome in the pontificate of Anicetus, in 154.<sup>5</sup> The two bishops had to settle some secondary questions which were quickly smoothed out; but there was one important matter upon which they

<sup>1</sup> Bibliography.—The principal documents will be found in Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, V, xxiii-xxv. To these must be added the texts mentioned later, especially the *Epistola Apostolorum*, ch. xv in the Ethiopian (ch. viii in the Coptic). Duchesne, *Les origines chrétiennes*, ch. xvi pp. 237-246; *La Question de la Pâque au concile de Nicée*, in *Revue des questions historiques*, Vol. XXVIII, 1880, pp. 5-42; *Histoire ancienne de l'Eglise*, Vol. I, pp. 285-291; C. Schmidt, *Gespräche Jesu mit seinen Jüngern*, Leipzig, 1919, Exkurs III, *Die Passahfeier in der kleinasiatischen Kirche*, pp. 577-725.

<sup>2</sup> This progress will be described in later chapters.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *supra*, Bk. II, p. 435.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted by Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, V, xxiv, 16.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Lightfoot, *Ignatius*, Vol. I, p. 676; Bardy in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, 1927, pp. 496-501. We must not urge against Irenæus the *Life of Polycarp* attributed to Pionius; this apocryphal document was composed by a Syrian towards the middle of the fourth century, and is devoid of authority. Cf. Schmidt, *op. cit.*, pp. 705-725.

could not come to an agreement, the Easter question. The Asiatics commemorated Easter on the 14th Nisan, whatever the day of the week; the Romans celebrated it on the Sunday which followed the 14th Nisan. This diversity of dates involved a diversity of rites and of feasts: Easter was for the Asiatics the day of the death of the Lord; they fasted on that day, even if it fell on a Sunday, and broke bread only in the evening, the solemnity ending with the Eucharist and the agape.<sup>6</sup> The Romans, on the contrary, devoted three days to the memory of the death and resurrection of Christ, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, the two first being days of mourning and fasting; the vigil between Saturday and Sunday prepared them for the feast of the Resurrection, celebrated on the Sunday.<sup>7</sup>

This difference in liturgical usage was the more awkward because of the fact that there were a fair number of Asiatics in the Roman community. These on the whole remained faithful to their own particular custom. The Bishops of Rome tolerated this divergence,<sup>8</sup> but they must have wished for its disappearance.

Polycarp doubtless desired this as much as Anicetus, and we may suppose that if this aged man, more than eighty years old, undertook the voyage to Rome, it was mainly in order to regulate so grave a question.

In spite of evident goodwill on both sides, they could not come to an agreement: "Anicetus could not persuade Polycarp not to observe what he had always observed with John, the disciple of Our Lord, and with the other apostles, whom he had known, and Polycarp equally could not persuade Anicetus to follow this observance, for Anicetus told him that he had to keep to the custom of the presbyters who had preceded him."<sup>9</sup>

The two bishops, equally attached to their different traditions, bowed in presence of this obstacle which seemed insurmountable. They could not ensure liturgical uniformity, but at least they kept the peace between them, and in order to give an evident sign of this, and also to show his veneration for Polycarp, Anicetus gave

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Schmidt, *op. cit.*, pp. 699 *et seq.*

<sup>7</sup> On what day did the Asiatics commemorate the Resurrection? This point remains obscure. Schmidt (*op. cit.*, p. 705) thinks that the commemoration was postponed to the Sunday which followed Easter.

<sup>8</sup> It was Irenæus who reminded Bishop Victor of this in 190: the bishops who were his predecessors had not expelled anyone from the Church because of this diversity of usage, and they sent the Eucharist to the members of the communities which followed the quartodeciman rule (*Hist. eccles.*, V, xxiv, 15).

<sup>9</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, V, xxiv, 16.

to the Bishop of Smyrna the honour of celebrating the Eucharist in a church in Rome.<sup>10</sup>

### *The Two Traditions*

Next year, Polycarp was martyred; in 166 Anicetus died in his turn. The Easter question was not settled; on the contrary, the conference between the two bishops had brought into clearer light the traditions which underlay the two usages: the Asiatics based their position not merely on a book, even if this were the fourth gospel, but on the evangelist himself, the beloved disciple,<sup>11</sup> and on the apostles who, like him, had observed this custom. The Romans on their side went back through the series of their presbyters to the founders of their church, Peter and Paul.<sup>12</sup> There is certainly nothing surprising in the fact that in two different provinces, two apostles, or two groups of apostles, may have followed a different liturgical calendar and bequeathed it to their churches; and it was naturally very difficult to lead one of the two churches to give up the tradition it had received from the apostles.

Nevertheless, the sacrifice was necessary: the Church could not maintain indefinitely a duality of usages which involved not only a diversity of dates but also a divergence in interpretation of the paschal festival. As Baumstark has said, "on the one hand Easter Sunday was lacking, on the other, Good Friday; in Asia the Pasch was the crucifixion of Christ, in Rome it was his Resurrection."<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Schmidt (*op. cit.*, p. 594) thinks that Polycarp was in Rome at the time of Easter. But he does not think with Zahn that the two bishops celebrated the feast together: in that case Anicetus would have given way to Polycarp, which precisely he had felt himself unable to do. But Polycarp must have celebrated for the Asiatics, and Anicetus must have allowed him to do so in his church. This interpretation is ingenious, but it is not certain: it has not been proved that this discussion and the voyage of Polycarp really took place at Easter time.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. on this point the very fair remarks of Schmidt, *op. cit.*, pp. 608 *et seq.*

<sup>12</sup> In his study on Easter in the early Christian Church (*Zeitschrift für wiss. Theol.*, N. F., Vol. XX, 4, p. 301), H. Koch maintains that the Roman Church in the time of Anicetus did not keep the Paschal festival at all. This error is well refuted by Schmidt (*op. cit.*, pp. 589 *et seq.*). Again, one must not infer from the text of Irenæus that Anicetus based himself on the custom of the presbyters who had preceded him, and not on an apostolic tradition. The mind of Irenæus is sufficiently clearly set forth in the *Adversus haereses*, which was certainly earlier than the letter to Victor.

<sup>13</sup> *Theologische Revue*, 1921, p. 264, in a review of Schmidt's work. Baumstark adds (p. 265), in order to explain the origin of this double apostolic tradition: "in the last analysis, one is tempted to explain this difference by the different recollec-



Apart from apostolic authority, the Asiatic custom had in its favour its fidelity to the 14th Nisan, the day of the immolation of the paschal lamb and of the death of Christ. The Roman usage was based on the liturgical observance of the week, already familiar to Christians, who kept the day of the Lord's death on the Friday, and the day of his Resurrection on the Sunday.<sup>14</sup>

An apocryphal work composed in Asia some fifteen years after the interview between Polycarp and Anicetus confirms what has just been said concerning the quartodeciman usage, its origin and signification. Jesus talks with His apostles after His Resurrection, and foretells the arrest of Peter, at a time when they will be celebrating the Pasch:

"You will celebrate the anniversary of my death, that is, the Pasch. And they will throw one of you into prison for my name: and he will weep and lament, because while you are celebrating the Pasch, he will be in prison, and will not be able to celebrate the feast with you. And I will send my Power in the form of an angel, and the door of the prison will open, and he will come to you, to watch with you. . . ." And we said to him: "Lord, hast Thou not thyself drunk the chalice of the pasch? Is it then necessary that we should drink it anew?" And He replied to us: "Yes, until I come again from my Father with my wounds."<sup>15</sup>

The Easter festival is thus the commemoration of the passion of Christ; the Eucharist then celebrated recalls, together with the Last Supper, the bloody death of the Lord and the chalice He drank, and which all the martyrs must drink in their turn.<sup>16</sup>

tions and interpretations, on the part of Peter and John, of the crisis which lasted from the Last Supper till the morning of Easter": John, who had witnessed the death of Christ, the Paschal Lamb, made that the centre of the Christian Pasch; Peter insisted rather on the Resurrection, of which he was one of the first witnesses.

<sup>14</sup> The quartodeciman usage necessarily meant that the solemnity of the death of Jesus and the fast would sometimes fall on the Sunday. The other Christians were shocked at this. Cf. Augustine, *De haeresibus*, xxix, speaking of the quartodecimans: "Non nisi quarta decima luna pascha celebrant, quilibet septem dierum occurrat dies et, si dies dominicus occurrerit, ipso die jejunt et vigilant" (quoted by Schmidt, *op. cit.*, p. 701, n. 3).

<sup>15</sup> *Epistola apostolorum*, xv.

<sup>16</sup> In 155, Polycarp on his funeral pile said to the Lord: "I bless Thee because Thou hast judged me worthy . . . to take part among the martyrs in the chalice of thy Christ." Cf. Schmidt, *op. cit.*, pp. 702 and n. 1.

*The Judaisers at Laodicea*

These memories and traditions were authentically Christian; but side by side with the quartodeciman usage, and under cover of it, we find about the year 170 a Judaising tendency which troubled certain churches of Asia Minor, and in particular the church of Laodicea. To deal with the danger, Melito wrote concerning the Pasch, "under Servilius Paulus, proconsul of Asia, in the time when Sagaris was martyred."<sup>17</sup> At the same date Apollinaris of Hierapolis, who, like Melito, was attached to the quartodeciman usage, also took up his pen to combat the Judaisers.<sup>18</sup> Clement of Alexandria and Hippolytus wrote books concerning the Pasch which have not come down to us, but which seem equally to have aimed at excluding the Judaising observance of the paschal lamb. From all this Duchesne infers that "in the churches of Asia, Alexandria and even of Rome there was, towards the end of the second century, a revival in favour of the Jewish custom of the paschal lamb, and everywhere, in the churches of the quartodeciman rite as in those of the Sunday celebration, this revival was condemned, with the help of the Gospel of St. John, and the texts of the Synoptic Gospels were explained in a similar manner."<sup>19</sup>

*Blastus*

This fermentation and confusion which affected the whole Church added to the danger of the divergence of Easter customs. They revealed the danger in the quartodeciman practice: some people could thereby be drawn aside to Judaising observances. The schism of Blastus at Rome itself made this danger still more apparent. It explains the vigorous character of Victor's intervention. As Duchesne remarks, "Certainly the quartodeciman observance was

<sup>17</sup> These lines are taken by Eusebius (*Hist. eccles.*, IV, xxvi, 3) from the treatise of Melito. The treatise itself is lost: it consisted of two books.

<sup>18</sup> Duchesne (*art. cit.*, p. 9) quotes this fragment preserved in the *Paschal Chronicle*, prooemium, Migne, P.G., Vol. XCII, 80: "There are some who through ignorance stir up quarrels concerning this. They are excusable; ignorance is not a sin: they are to be, not accused, but rather instructed. They think that on the 14th day the Lord ate the Lamb with his disciples, and that He suffered on the great day of the Azyms; they explain Matthew in accordance with their view. But this system cannot be harmonised with the Law; it introduces a contradiction between the gospels. The 14th day is the true Pasch of the Lord, the great sacrifice; in place of the Lamb, we have the Son of God . . ."

<sup>19</sup> *Art. cit.*, p. 11.

one thing, and the Mosaic rite of the lamb another, but it is evident that the quartodeciman observance provided, as it were, a link with this latter rite. . . . The conduct of the Pope was therefore logical and wise, and the proof of this is that it was supported by the whole Church.”<sup>20</sup>

### *Initiative of Pope Victor*

Realising the gravity of the question, the bishop of Rome requested the holding of provincial synods.<sup>21</sup> Everywhere save in Asia, the bishops “decided that the mystery of the Resurrection of the Saviour from the dead was to be celebrated on no other day than the Sunday, and that only on that day was the Paschal fast to end.”<sup>22</sup> Eusebius tells us that the documents of the case comprised letters from the bishops in Palestine, bishops assembled in Rome, bishops in Pontus, the churches of Gaul, in which Irenæus was a bishop, and bishops of Osroene, as well as individual letters from Bacchyle, Bishop of Corinth, and several others. All were unanimous.<sup>23</sup>

### *Resistance of the Asiatics*

In the face of this very general agreement of the Christian churches, the Asiatics maintained their particular tradition. Polycrates, bishop of Ephesus, wrote in their name to the bishop of Rome:

We carefully keep the Paschal observance, without addition or subtraction.

<sup>20</sup> *Art. cit.*, p. 13. On the relations between the quartodeciman usage and Judaism, cf. Schmidt, *op. cit.*, pp. 622 *et seq.*

<sup>21</sup> This initiative on the part of Rome is expressly affirmed by Polycrates of Ephesus in the case of the Asiatic synod: “I could make mention of the bishops who are here with me: you have requested me to convoke them; I have done so” (*Hist. eccles.*, V, xxiv, 8). The other synods mentioned by Eusebius (*ibid.*, xxiii, 2-4) probably resulted from the same initiative at the same time. It has been suggested that the others were convoked by the Pope only after the reply of the Asiatics. The text of Eusebius does not enable us to settle this minor point, but it is much more likely that the Pope, knowing the dispositions of Polycrates, decided from the first to get the views of the other churches.

<sup>22</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, V, xxiii, 2.

<sup>23</sup> On these synods, cf. Hefele-Leclercq, *Hist. des conciles*, Vol. I, p. 150; Batiffol, *L'Eglise naissante*, pp. 271 *et seq.*

In Asia great lights were extinguished which will rise again in the day of the Coming of the Lord, when He shall come with glory from heaven and seek out all the saints: Philip, one of the twelve apostles, who was buried at Hierapolis, together with his two daughters who grew old in virginity (a third, who lived in the Holy Spirit, rests at Ephesus). Also John, who reposed on the Lord's bosom, and was a priest wearing the golden breastplate, and a martyr and a doctor: he is buried at Ephesus. Then Polycarp, who was Bishop at Smyrna and a martyr; and Thraseas of Eumenia, bishop and martyr, who is buried at Smyrna. Need we recall Sagaris, bishop and martyr, who is buried at Laodicea, and the blessed Papirius, and the eunuch Melito who lived altogether in the Holy Spirit and who lies at Sardis, waiting till the Lord comes from heaven on the day when he will rise again from the dead? All these have kept the date of the fourteenth day for the celebration of the Pasch, according to the Gospel, deviating in nothing, but following the rule of the faith.

And I also, I, Polycrates, the least of you all, I do as my relatives have taught me, some of whom were my masters; for there have been seven bishops in my family, and I am the eighth. Always my relatives observed the day in which the people put away fermented bread. For myself, then, my brethren, I who have lived sixty-five years in the Lord and have conversed with the brethren of the whole world, and have read the holy Scripture from end to end—I do not allow myself to be affrighted by endeavours to terrify us, for those greater than I have written: "We ought to obey God rather than men."

I could make mention of the bishops who are here with me: You have requested me to convoke them: I have done so. If I were to write down all their names, the list would be a long one. All know me, poor man that I am; they have approved my letter, knowing that I have not white hairs in vain, and that I have always lived in Christ Jesus.<sup>24</sup>

This bitter and impassioned letter reveals the gravity of the conflict. In 154 the hopeful visit of Polycarp to Anicetus had failed to end it, in spite of the veneration of the bishop of Rome for the aged bishop of Smyrna; in 190 the urgent and threatening intervention of Victor seems to have collapsed in presence of the tenacity of Polycrates and his Asiatic colleagues. These stiffened their attitude, and at Rome itself their resistance found support in the group of Asiatic Christians. Blastus decided to break with Victor; Irenæus, himself an Asiatic but one who had adopted the liturgical

<sup>24</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, V, xxiv, 2-8.

usage of the Romans and was anxious for the peace of the Church, wrote a letter to Blastus on the schism.<sup>25</sup>

### *Intervention of Irenæus*

About the same date, Irenæus wrote to Pope Victor on the same subject, and also to many other bishops.<sup>26</sup> Angered by the vehement letter from Polycrates, the bishop of Rome had decided to carry out his threats and excommunicate the Christian communities of all Asia and the neighbouring churches as heretics. So severe a measure, aimed at churches so venerable and so numerous, and which constituted one of the chief centres of Christianity, "did not please all the bishops." Several, whose letters were known to Eusebius, made very strong remonstrances; "Irenæus, in the name of the brethren he governed in Gaul, also wrote. In the first place he affirmed that one should keep the Roman custom, and always celebrate the mystery of the resurrection of the Lord on a Sunday. Then he respectfully exhorted Victor not to excommunicate whole churches because of their fidelity to an ancient tradition." Lastly, he recalled the previous facts as we know them, the long toleration on the part of Victor's predecessors, the fraternal meeting of Polycarp and Anicetus, characterised by mutual deference, and he urged the Pope to live likewise in peace with the Asiatics: "even if there is a difference in the observation of the fast," he said, "the faith is the same."

### *Abatement of the Conflict*

This respectful adjuration was listened to; Victor had the good sense to follow the advice of the Bishop of Lyons, and the Church

<sup>25</sup> This letter is mentioned by Eusebius (*Hist. eccles.*, V, xx, 1) when speaking of the letter to Florinus, just as he recalls together the fall of Florinus and that of Blastus (*ibid.*, V, xv). Blastus very likely belonged, like Florinus, to the group of Asiatics in Rome. But his fall was not of the same nature. Florinus was led astray into Gnosticism, and Irenæus wrote him a letter "on the monarchy, or that God is not the author of evil." To Blastus he wrote concerning schism. In point of fact, pseudo-Tertullian (liii) represents Blastus as a Judaising quartodeciman. Cf. Duchesne, *Origines chrétiennes*, p. 244; La Piana, *The Roman Church at the end of the Second Century*, in *Harvard Theological Review*, 1925, p. 213; Schmidt, *op. cit.*, pp. 620-622.

<sup>26</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, V, xxiv, 11-18.

to-day is still grateful to St. Irenæus for having been a peace-maker.<sup>27</sup>

At what date did the Asiatics adopt the Roman custom? We do not know;<sup>28</sup> history manifests no further trace of the controversy which we have found at the end of the second century. There were still quartodecimans later, but these were heretics, regarded as such by all the churches. The Easter question discussed at the Council of Nicæa was quite a different one. The celebration of Easter on the Sunday was accepted by all: the only question that remained was whether, in determining the date of Easter, the Jewish reckoning was to be followed, as was the custom at Antioch, or whether it should be calculated independently, as was done elsewhere, and for instance at Alexandria and Rome. This last method was the one decided upon, and the Church was finally freed from the Synagogue.<sup>29</sup>

The sad conflict which we have outlined has shown once more the attachment of the churches to the apostolic tradition; it has also shown that the love of unity is still more powerful than fidelity to traditional customs; and we have seen that more and more this Catholic unity was ensured by the communion of all the churches with the See of Rome.

## § 2. THE DOCTRINAL CONTROVERSIES AND THE SCHISM OF HIPPOLYTUS

### *Character of the Doctrinal Controversies at the End of the Second Century*

In the latter half of the second century, several heretics broke away from the Christian Church: the Gnostics, the Marcionites, and the Montanists. These events led to a reaction both theological and disciplinary. Towards the end of the century, new dangers provided the occasion for a new doctrinal progress. The heresiarchs

<sup>27</sup> It is with this encomium that Eusebius concludes his account of this conflict (*Hist. eccles.*, V, xxiv, 18). The Church echoes it still to-day, in her liturgy (see the Collect for the feast of St. Irenæus).

<sup>28</sup> Such is the ultimate conclusion of the long study of Schmidt, *op. cit.*, p. 725.

<sup>29</sup> This subject has been finally clarified by Duchesne in his article in the *Revue des quest. hist.*, Vol. xxviii, pp. 16-42. On the Paschal reckoning of Hippolytus, cf. *infra*, pp. 742-743.

who at that time menaced Christian doctrine did not separate themselves from the communion of the Church as Valentine, Marcion or Montanus had done: they sought to remain within her, and claimed to retain her doctrine. But the interpretation they gave to it transformed it.

These heretics may be divided into two groups, of very different character.<sup>1</sup> Some attacked Christological doctrine, denied the divinity of Jesus Christ, and regarded him only as a man chosen and adopted by God; these are called Adoptianists. The others attacked the Trinitarian doctrine, and in order to safeguard the divine unity, or, as they called it, the "monarchy," they denied the distinction between the divine Persons; these are called Monarchianists.

### *Adoptianism*

Adoptianism,<sup>2</sup> which degraded Christ to the level of the adopted gods imagined by paganism, struck at the heart of the Christian faith. At the same time it could count not only on the connivance of Christians recently or badly converted, but also on the sympathy of the Judaisers. Cerinthus and the Ebionites of Palestine had previously professed this diminished Christianity;<sup>3</sup> but apart from these heretical circles, Adoptianism had sometimes menaced ignorant and imprudent Christians; thus the language, if not the thought, of Hermas displays this contamination.<sup>4</sup> When in the time

<sup>1</sup> This profound difference did not prevent these two groups from sometimes supporting each other: by denying the distinction between the divine persons, the Monarchianists provided a basis for Adoptianism. We shall see this in the history of Paul of Samosata (see Bk. IV).

<sup>2</sup> Adoptianism is made known to us mainly by Hippolytus, who opposed it in several of his works:

(a) *Syntagma* (or *Summary*) against all the heresies: a work prior to the *Philosophumena*, which mentions it (I, proem., p. 1, i, 20). It is mentioned by Photius (*Bibl.*, cod. 121), but is now lost. It was utilised by pseudo-Tertullian, Epiphanius, and Philastrius. On this book, cf. D'Alès, *Hippolyte*, pp. 71-77; Lipsius, *Zur Quellenkritik des Epiphanius*, Vienna, 1865, pp. 33-70. On Theodotus and Adoptianism, see pseudo-Tertullian, *Haer.*, xxiii, *De praescript.*, liii; Epiphanius, *Haer.*, liv; Philastrius, 1. For a comparison of these sources, see Lipsius, pp. 235-237.

(b) *Philosophumena*, especially VII, xxxv; IX, iii, 12; X, xxiii, 27.

(c) *Adversus haeresim Noeti*, iii (possibly forming part of the *Syntagma*).

(d) *Contra Artemon* (*Hist. eccles.*, V, xxviii). On this work cf. p. 727, n. 5.

<sup>3</sup> It is, in fact, to the school "of the Gnostics and of Cerinthus and Ebion" that Hippolytus attaches the teaching of Theodotus. *Philos.*, VII, xxxv, 1. On Cerinthus, cf. *supra*, p. 620-621.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *supra*, Bk. II, p. 453.

of Pope Zephyrinus (197-217) the Adoptianists began to propagate their heresy in Rome, they endeavoured to give it an apostolic origin: "They say that all the elders and apostles themselves received and taught what they themselves teach to-day, and that the true teaching was kept until the time of Victor, the thirteenth bishop of Rome from Peter, but that since Zephyrinus his successor it has been altered."<sup>5</sup>

To these pretensions, Hippolytus opposes "the divine Scriptures" and the Catholic writers, witnesses to tradition and much earlier than Victor: "Justin, Miltiades, Tatian, Clement, and many others":

All these writers speak of Christ as a God. Who is unaware of the books of Irenæus, Melito, and others, which proclaim that Christ is God and man? Who does not know the numerous canticles and hymns written by faithful brethren from the beginning, in which they sing of Christ as the Word of God, and hail him as God? How then can it be said that the real sentiment of the Church was declared so many years ago and that those who lived before Victor taught in the way they maintain? How is it that they can unblushingly utter such lies about Victor? They know perfectly well that Victor excommunicated the corrupt Theodotus, the leader and father of this apostasy denying God, and the first to say that Christ was a mere man.<sup>6</sup>

### *Theodotus*

This Theodotus, if we may believe Epiphanius (LIV, 1), was an instructed and learned Christian who had, however, denied the faith in consequence of persecution. He belonged to Byzantium, but not being able to bear his shame there, he went to Rome. One day

<sup>5</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, V, xxviii, 3. This text is taken by Eusebius from "a work against the heresy of Artemon." This work, quoted at length by Eusebius in this chapter, was utilised also by Theodoret, *Haer. fab.*, III, iv, 5, who calls it the *Little Labyrinth*. This text, compared with a statement of Photius (*Biblioth.*, 48), has led some to set in this treatise a work by Hippolytus. Cf. D'Alès, *op. cit.*, pp. xxxii-xxxiv, and 108-109. Against this identification, Bardy (*Paul de Samosate*, p. 490, n. 2) brings forward a text of the Council of Antioch in 268 which condemned Paul of Samosata, and invited him ironically to send letters of communion to Artemon (*Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxx, 17). The objection does not seem decisive: Artemon could have been opposed by Hippolytus towards the end of his literary career and still be living thirty-five years later. Cf. Kidd, *op. cit.*, p. 365. "Artemas, or Artemon, continued their tradition in Rome, c. 235; and, though we know little about him, he may be regarded as the link between the Adoptionism of the Theodotians and of Paul of Samosata."

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* V, xxviii, 4-6.



he met a Byzantine who reproached him for his apostasy. He replied: "It is not God I have denied, but a man." Pressed to explain himself, he added that Christ was only a man, and that to have denied him was not damnable, since Jesus himself said in the Gospel: "If anyone blaspheme the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him, but he who blasphemeth the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven."

Victor expelled Theodotus from the Church.<sup>7</sup> This condemnation did not stifle the sect: though few in numbers and without following, but proud of their culture, these new doctors searched the Scriptures for what seemed to them to favour their view, leaving aside what condemned it.<sup>8</sup> They went farther still, "not fearing to corrupt the divine Scriptures and to reject the rule of faith,"<sup>9</sup> and so, going outside Scripture and Christian Tradition, they took refuge in their own reasonings:

They care not about what the holy books say, but they laboriously seek out a form of reasoning which would support their impiety. If one objects to them a text of holy Scripture, they ask if this can be made into a conjunctive or disjunctive syllogism. Leaving aside the divine Scriptures, they cultivate geometry; they are of the earth, they speak of the earth, and know not Him who comes from above. Euclid thus geometrises actively amongst some of them; Aristotle and Theophrastus receive their admiration; Galen is almost worshipped by others. They misuse the art of unbelievers in favour of their heresy; with impious wickedness they alter the simple faith of the divine Scriptures. . . . They are not afraid to lay hands on the Scriptures, saying that they do so to correct them. Anyone who wishes can ascertain that I am not calumniating them. For if one compares their copies (of the Scripture) with one another, one will find them very different. Those of Asclepiades do not agree with those of Theodotus. . . . Some

<sup>7</sup> Harnack (*Dogmengeschichte*, Vol. I, p. 709), remarks: "This is the first instance known to us of a Christian holding to the rule of faith and nevertheless regarded as a heretic," and he adds in a note: "It is significant that this took place in Rome." We cannot regard this as an innovation, nor such severity as peculiar to the Roman church: witness the attitude towards heresy taken up by St. John, St. Ignatius, and St. Polycarp.

<sup>8</sup> Philastrius: "They make use of the texts of the Scriptures which speak of Christ as a man, but leave aside those which speak of him as God." Epiphanius has transmitted to us a few fragments of their exegesis; it is to be noted that they accepted the Johannine writings. This implies that already at that time, in spite of the isolated denials by Gaius, the Canon of the New Testament was generally unquestioned. Cf. Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte*, Vol. I, p. 710 and n. 1.

<sup>9</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, V, xxviii, 13.

even have disdained to make these falsifications, but have simply rejected the law and the prophets, and under the pretext of grace<sup>10</sup> they have cast themselves to the bottom of the pit of perdition by an immoral and impious teaching.<sup>11</sup>

### *Rationalistic Character of Adoptianism*

This description of Adoptianism is extremely interesting: it reveals at the beginning of the third century an acute rationalistic crisis. None of the preceding heresies had manifested this character. All laid claim to a more sublime knowledge of God; they based themselves on secret traditions and revelations. There is nothing like that here, but instead we have Hellenic science, Euclid, Aristotle, Theophrastus, and conjunctive and disjunctive syllogisms.<sup>12</sup> Later on we shall find the same arid and haughty rationalism in Paul of Samosata, and later still, in the Arians; it is a feature of the corrupt Christianity which sees in Jesus only a man.

Nevertheless, the disciples of the first Theodotus, the other Theodotus, called the banker, and Asclepiodotus, tried to give to their little sect the form of a church; they engaged as bishop a Roman confessor, Natalis, at a salary of 150 deniers a month.<sup>13</sup> This unfortunate man was warned by visions, which he disregarded; finally, if we may believe Hippolytus, he was whipped by angels, then repented, and with great difficulty obtained his reconciliation.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Grapin has omitted this word "grace" in his text of Eusebius, but wrongly, in our view. Cf. Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte*, Vol. I. p. 713.

<sup>11</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, V, xxviii, 13-19.

<sup>12</sup> These syllogisms belong to the Stoic logic. The conjunctive syllogism (*ἀξίωμα συνημμένον*) is conditional in form, for instance, "If it is light, one sees clearly": the disjunctive is the dilemma, for instance: "It is either day or night." Cf. J. von Arnim, *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta*, II. *Chrysippi fragmenta logica*, Leipzig, 1903, pp. 68 *et seq.*

<sup>13</sup> At this period we find clerics paid by the community only in the heretical sects. Apollonius makes this complaint about Montanus: "He paid salaries to those who preached his doctrine, so that gluttony should make the teaching of his words prevail" (*Hist. eccles.*, V. xviii, 2). Cf. Kidd, *op. cit.*, p. 363. In the time of St. Cyprian, these salaries were in usage in the Catholic Church (*Epist.* xxxiv, 4; xxxix, 5).

<sup>14</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, V, xxviii, 8-13. Hippolytus (*Philos.*, VII, xxxvi, 1) says that Theodotus the banker was the author of a new form of heresy: "He says that Melchisedech is the supreme Power, and is greater than Christ, and that Christ is in his image." Cf. Epiphanius, *Haer.*, LV; fragment of Eustathius of Antioch, edited by Cavallera, *S. Eustathii in Lazarum homilia* (1905), pp. xii-xiv: "Trying

### Artemon

After these first upholders of Adoptianism, the sect was represented, until the time of Paul of Samosata, by Artemon. In the West it disappeared as a sect, but the rationalism from which it arose survived it, and gave it new life over and over again.<sup>15</sup> In the East its persistence was more marked in Paul of Samosata and then in the Arians. "Arianism is none other than a compromise between Adoptianism and the theology of the Word, and this compromise shows that, from the end of the third century, any Christology which did not recognise the personal pre-existence of Christ was impossible in the Church."<sup>16</sup>

### Monarchianism

Monarchianism<sup>17</sup> was at the commencement of the third century a greater danger for the Church than Adoptianism. The teaching of Theodotus was a direct affront to Christian sentiment, and could not become popular in an age of lively faith. On the other hand, Monarchianism appealed to the masses by its zeal for the two great

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to prove that Melchisedech is greater than Christ, they bring forward in support the Scripture text: 'Thou art a priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedech.' 'How,' they say, 'could Christ be greater than the one whose image is reproduced by his priesthood, and in whose order he is?' Others again err by saying that Melchisedech is the Holy Spirit. As for ourselves, we say that Melchisedech was a man like us, and was not greater than Christ or John the Baptist, and that he is not the Holy Spirit." Cf. Bardy, *Melchisédech dans la tradition patristique*, in *Revue biblique*, 1926, pp. 496-509; 197, pp. 25-45; article *Melchisédecien* in *Dict. de Théol. Cath.*

<sup>15</sup> We may recall amongst others this text of St. Augustine, *Confessions*, VII, xix, 25: "I regarded Christ only as a man of eminent wisdom, and who was without equal, especially because the Master, having been born miraculously of a Virgin, seemed to have received from God an exceptional authority in order to teach us by his example to despise temporal things and strive for immortality. But as to the mystery of the Word made flesh, I could not even imagine this."

<sup>16</sup> Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte*, Vol. I, p. 732.

<sup>17</sup> The main sources are Hippolytus (*Adversus Noetum*, about 200-210; *Syntagma; Philosophumena*, after 222) and Tertullian (*Adversus Praxean*, after 213). Cf. Hagemann, *Die Roemische Kirche und ihr Einfluss auf Disciplin und Dogma in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten*, Freiburg, 1864, pp. 90-103, 119-125, 147-275; Harnack, article *Monarchianismus* in *Realencycl. f. protest. Theol.*, Vol. XIII, pp. 303-336; *Dogmengeschichte*, Vol. I, pp. 697-753; D'Alès, *Théologie de saint Hippolyte*, pp. 8-35; Ph. Kneir, *Der Monarchianismus und die roem. Kirche im dritten Jahrh. in Katholik*, 1905, Vol. II, pp. 1-15, 112-128; 182-201, 266-282.

dogmas of the divine unity and the divinity of Jesus Christ.<sup>18</sup> Tertullian was annoyed at the timidity of the simple who were alarmed at the affirmation of the Trinity, and who thought that the divine unity could be defended only by turning away from this "economy." Origen in turn was sometimes scornful of "the mass of those who are regarded as believers" and who "know only the Christ according to the flesh"; with more justice he elsewhere remarks on the attraction which Monarchianism might have for the simple: "They do not wish to seem to affirm two gods; they do not wish to deny the divinity of the Saviour; then they end by admitting merely two names, and one single person."<sup>19</sup>

At that time, when theological language was still somewhat undefined, and in which terms which were to become technical, such as *substance*, *hypostasis*, and *person*, had still the vague meaning given them in current speech, it was almost impossible to avoid all ambiguity.<sup>20</sup> For the same reason, a historian cannot now give to the theological conceptions which then confronted each other

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Tertullian, *Adversus Prax.*, III (*Corpus Script. Eccles. Lat.*, Vol. XLVII, 230): "All the simple-minded, not to say the stupid and the ignorant—always very numerous among the faithful—think that the rule of faith converts us from the polytheism of the world to the only true God, and do not realise that, while we must, of course, believe in the one God, it must be with his 'economy.' They are alarmed, thinking that the economy introduces number, that the Trinity threatens the Unity, whereas on the contrary, the Unity, making the Trinity to arise from itself, is not destroyed thereby but organised. Also, they repeat that we preach two or three gods, but that they adore one only God, as if it were not a heresy to restrict the Unity other than should be done, and as if it were not the truth to unfold the Trinity as must be done. 'We hold the Monarchy,' they say, for that is how they speak, even those who speak Latin, and they repeat this word with such energy that one might think they understand the Monarchy as well as they enunciate it." In an altogether different context, Origen is led to pass on the simple-minded a similar judgment. Distinguishing between four classes of people believing in God, he puts in the first class those "who share in the Logos who was at the beginning, the Logos God"; in the second, those "who know only Jesus Christ and Him crucified, thinking that the Logos made flesh is the whole Logos; these know Christ only according to the flesh; such are the mass of those regarded as believers" (*In Joann.*, II, iii, 27-31). On this passage, cf. Bk. IV, ch. xxviii, § 2.

<sup>19</sup> *In Titum* (Migne, P.G., Vol. XIV, 1304). This text, together with the two preceding ones, is mentioned by Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte*, Vol. I, p. 735, n. 1 and n. 3.

<sup>20</sup> To realise this, it suffices to read in the Latin translation by Rufinus, the text of Origen to which we have just referred: ". . . uti ne videantur duos deos dicere, neque rursus negare Salvatoris deitatem, unam eandemque substantiam Patris ac Filii asseverant, id est, duo quidem nomina secundum diversitatem causarum recipientes, unam tamen upostasim subsistere, id est, unam personam duobus nominibus subjacentem."

more precision than they in fact possessed. Another and still greater difficulty arises from the sources, and their nature. We know of this conflict only through Hippolytus and Tertullian, two impassioned controversialists: <sup>21</sup> when they wrote the books upon which we have to rely, Hippolytus was a schismatic and head of a little church in Rome, and Tertullian was a Montanist, a violent opponent of the church of the "psychics" and of the bishop of Rome. We must listen to these witnesses, the only ones which there are to hear, but we shall accept what they say only after a careful examination. We shall not hastily conclude from these diatribes that Monarchianism was throughout a whole generation the official doctrine of the Church of Rome.<sup>22</sup>

### Noetus

Like Adoptianism, the Monarchian heresy arose in Asia, and from thence travelled to Rome. Hippolytus tells us about its beginnings.<sup>23</sup> After remarking that Noetus was a native of Smyrna <sup>24</sup> who, urged on by pride, thought himself inspired by the Holy Spirit, he thus describes his teaching:

Christ, he says, is the Father himself, and it was the Father himself who was born, suffered and died. As for himself, he claimed to be Moses, and that his brother was Aaron. The blessed presbyters summoned him and interrogated him before the whole Church. At first he denied, then later, having thought of some equivocations and gathered together a few accomplices of his error, he decided to maintain his teaching openly. The blessed presbyters summoned him again, and

<sup>21</sup> We must also remark that these two witnesses are not completely in agreement (cf. D'Alès, *Saint Hippolyte*, pp. 16-18). Moreover, Tertullian is directly referring only to Praxeas, of whom Hippolytus says nothing (cf. Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte*, Vol. I, p. 734, n. 1). Hagemann (*op. cit.*, pp. 234-256) solves this difficulty by identifying Praxeas with Callistus, but this identification is not without its difficulties (cf. D'Alès, *op. cit.*, p. 19).

<sup>22</sup> This thesis has been maintained by Harnack, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 735.

<sup>23</sup> The book *Contra Noetum*, from which we take the extract which follows in the text, seems to have formed part of the *Syntagma*, now lost, written about the year 200. Twenty-five or thirty years later, in the *Philosophumena*, written after the death of Callistus (222), Hippolytus returned on two occasions to his polemic against Monarchianism. These works we study later on; they display a riper theological thought, but also, as against the bishops of Rome, Zephyrinus and above all Callistus, they breathe a hatred not yet displayed in the book against Noetus. Cf. D'Alès, *Saint Hippolyte*, pp. 22-23.

<sup>24</sup> *Adv. Noet.*, I; *Philos.*, IX, vii. Epiphanius says he taught at Ephesus (*Haer.*, lvi, 1).

convicted him. But he resisted them, saying: "Is it then a sin to glorify Christ?" The presbyters replied: "We also confess truly one sole God; we confess the Christ; we confess the Son who suffered as He suffered, who died as He died, who rose again the third day, who is at the right hand of the Father, who will come to judge the living and the dead. And this we say as we have learnt." Then, having convicted him, they expelled him from the Church. But he was so swollen with pride that he founded a sect.<sup>25</sup>

We notice here, on the occasion of the second and decisive appearance of Noetus before the presbyters, the appeal to the rule of faith, that is, the baptismal creed, confessing one only God, but confessing also the Son of God and all the mysteries of his life;<sup>26</sup> the traditional faith, which the presbyters repeat as they have received it. Noetus does not continue the discussion on that ground: he hardens his heart, and departs. The arguments he uses seem, according to Hippolytus, to be texts of the Old Testament: "I am the God of your fathers, you shall have no other god but me" (*Exod.* iii, 6; xx, 3), "I am the first and the last, and after me there is no other" (*Isaias* xlv, 6); and some words of the Lord: "I and the Father are one" (*John* x, 30), "He who has seen me, has seen the Father: thou believest not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me" (*ibid.*, xiv, 8-9); and again this text of St. Paul: ". . . the fathers, of whom is Christ according to the flesh, who is the supreme God, blessed for ever" (*Rom.* ix, 5). From this he infers: "The Father is Christ; He is the Son; He was born; He suffered; He rose again."<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup> *Adv. Noet.*, 1.

<sup>26</sup> The insistence with which the reality of the passion and death of the Son of God are affirmed, recalls the profession of faith of St. Ignatius: "He really suffered persecution under Pontius Pilate, was really crucified . . ." (*Trall.*, ix).

<sup>27</sup> In addition to these Scriptural texts appealed to by Noetus, it seems that we can perceive, by the refutations by Hippolytus, vestiges of patristic arguments. It is difficult not to see an allusion to St. Ignatius and to St. Irenæus in passages like this: "They say that the same God is the Demiurge and the Father of all things, who willed to appear to the just of former times, although He is invisible; for when He is not seen, He is invisible (when He is seen He is visible); He is incomprehensible when He does not will to be comprehended, comprehensible when He is comprehended. So, according to the same reasoning, He is perceptible and imperceptible, ingenerate and engendered, immortal and mortal" (*Philos.*, IX, x, 9-10; cf. X, xxvii, 1-2). Cf. Ignatius, *Ephes.*, vii, 2, and *Pol.*, iii, 2; in these two texts Ignatius contrasts the two series of attributes which belong to the Son of God according to his divine nature and his human nature (cf. *Hist. du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, p. 294). This theology was not Monarchian, but the contrasts it set forth might provide Noetus with the apparent support he was

These texts suffice to show the bearing of the new heresy and its character: it excluded from God all distinction of persons, and as a consequence it perverted the Gospel. It not only contradicted the few texts recalled by Hippolytus,<sup>28</sup> but above all it ran counter to the most evident feature of the religion of Jesus: his devoted and most loving submission to the will of his Father, his prayer, his sacrifice, and the whole work of redemption. These denials were bound to appear intolerable to thoughtful Christians; others might be led astray by a theological construction so simple in appearance and so manifestly opposed both to the polytheism of the pagans and to the impiety of the Adoptianists. This contrast between Noetus and Theodotus must be stressed; later on we shall find the two heresies combining, and the Unitarians adopting the Christology of Theodotus and Artemon. But that did not happen at the beginning: Noetus thought his theology defended the honour of Christ: his first reply to his judges was: "Is it then a sin to glorify Christ?"

### *Praxeas*

The first to endeavour to propagate in Rome this error from Asia was Praxeas. Hippolytus does not mention him, but Tertullian makes him known to us. His book, written after 213, takes us back some twenty years to the first attempts of the heretic. In Asia, Praxeas had suffered for the faith; he had passed some time in prison. When he arrived in Rome he traded on his position as a

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seeking for his teaching. So also the texts of Irenæus on God as naturally invisible but seen by grace: ". . . That which is impossible to men is possible to God. For man of himself sees not God; but God, because He wills it, is seen by men, by those whom He wills, when He wills, as He wills, for God can do all things" (IV, xx, 5). "He who is incomprehensible and imperceptible and invisible has made Himself to be seen and grasped and comprehended by his faithful, in order to vivify by faith those who comprehend and see Him" (*ibid.*). Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 534-535. These comparisons will have greater significance the more it is found possible to see in them the influence of an Asiatic theology which Noetus, a native of Smyrna, had doubtless falsified but had certainly known and utilised. But while admitting the value of these comparisons, we must beware of inferring, with Loofs and Kroymann, that this Asiatic theology was Modalist. Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 306-308. Lastly, we must note that these texts appeared in the *Philosophumena*, but not as yet in the *Adversus Noetum*.

<sup>28</sup> *Adv. Noet.*, ch. vii: "He was sent by the Father, and He goes towards the Father" (816).

confessor in order to spread his doctrine, and, what made him still more blameworthy in the eyes of Tertullian, he became an opponent of the Montanists. He found the bishop of Rome favourably disposed to the prophecies of Montanus; he caused him to change his mind, by telling him what he knew personally about the prophets and churches of Asia, and by reminding him of previous decisions of his predecessors. "In this way Praxeas accomplished two diabolical things: he expelled prophecy and he implanted heresy; he put to flight the Paraclete and he crucified the Father."<sup>29</sup>

### *Progress of the Heresy in Africa*

From Rome the error had been taken into Africa.<sup>30</sup> The seed had germinated but it had been stifled, thanks to the efforts of Tertullian while still a Catholic; Praxeas had to sign a retraction which the Church still possessed when the *Adversus Praxean* was being written. After a short period of silence, the heresy burst out afresh. Tertullian in the meantime had, as he puts it, "recognised the Paraclete, and had separated from the psychicals"; but he remained attached to belief in the Trinity, and wrote in its defence.<sup>31</sup>

### *Hippolytus and Callistus*

At Rome, however, the menace continued. Hippolytus describes its development in accounts full of impassioned accusations against

<sup>29</sup> The Modalists, who effaced all personal distinction between the Father and the Son, held in consequence that the Father was crucified, whence their name of Patripassians.

<sup>30</sup> Did Praxeas himself go to Africa? Noeldechen thinks he did (*Texte und Untersuchungen*, Vol. V, 2, p. 162, n. 5); so also Kneib (*Katholik*, 1905, Vol. II, p. 3). Tertullian does not assert it expressly (cf. D'Alès, *Tertullien*, p. 68, n. 2).

<sup>31</sup> The theological work of Tertullian will be discussed later on, pp. 673-683. The account of the doings of Praxeas, which we have taken from Tertullian, enables us to understand the silence of Hippolytus; the teaching of Praxeas in Rome was prior to the activity of Hippolytus; the heretic had retracted, and it was a new outbreak of Monarchianism which some twenty years later led Tertullian to recall all these facts. Who was the bishop whom Praxeas had led astray on his arrival in Rome? Harnack (*Dogmengeschichte*, Vol. I, p. 742) thinks it was Eleutherius, and he infers from this that during four successive pontificates (Eleutherius, Victor, Zephyrinus, Callistus), a Modalist Christology was held by the bishop of Rome. We shall discuss this statement below; as for Eleutherius, we think he must be left outside the conflict; Praxeas invoked against the Montanist prophecy, in the presence of the bishop of Rome, "the authority of his predecessors"; this cannot apply to Eleutherius, who was the first who had to face this question.



the bishops Zephyrinus and Callistus. Noetus had not visited Rome, but his teaching was represented there by his "deacon and disciple"<sup>32</sup> Epigonus: "he lived in Rome and there spread his impious doctrine." He in turn had as disciple a certain Cleomenes, who had a school. The bishop Zephyrinus, whom Hippolytus represents as a fool and a miser, allowed all those who wished to hear the teaching of Cleomenes. Zephyrinus had as adviser the deacon Callistus, the object of all the hatred of Hippolytus. Protected by the bishop and his deacon, the school of Cleomenes attracted many adherents; in this group one man stood out who was bolder than the others: Sabellius, later on the leader of a sect to which he gave his name. Amongst all these people Callistus, according to Hippolytus, played a double game: he allowed the orthodox to think that he was of their opinion; he said the same to Sabellius, and thereby lost him, for Hippolytus assures us that Sabellius was not too obstinate: "When he exhorted him, he did not harden his heart; but when he found himself once more alone with Callistus, he allowed himself to be led away into the doctrine of Cleomenes, as Callistus told him that he also held this." "As for Zephyrinus, Callistus pushed him forward, and made him say to the people: 'I know only one God, Christ Jesus, and apart from Him no other who was born or could suffer'; and at other times: 'It was not the Father who died, but the Son.' And thus he fostered discord among the people."

Hippolytus claims that he saw through his adversary's deceit, and that Callistus was furious in consequence, treating Hippolytus and his friends as ditheists. On the death of Zephyrinus, Callistus became bishop of Rome (217-222). He began by excommunicating Sabellius for fear of Hippolytus, and to put on an appearance of orthodoxy. "Nevertheless," continues Hippolytus, "as all the world knew that Callistus accused us of ditheism, and as moreover Sabellius reproached him for being a turncoat, he invented the following heresy":

The Word is the Son himself, the Father himself. There is only one and the same indivisible spirit, except in name. The Father is not one thing and the Son another: they are one and the same thing, the divine Spirit which fills all things above and below. The Spirit, made flesh in the Virgin, is not other than the Father, but one and the same

<sup>32</sup> Are these two terms to be understood in their technical sense? We do not know. Perhaps Hippolytus wished merely to indicate thereby the dependance of Epigonus upon Noetus.

thing. Hence Scripture says: "Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?" (*John* xiv, 11). The visible element, the man, is the Son; and the spirit which dwells in the Son, is the Father. I will not speak of two gods, the Father and the Son, but of one alone. For the Father who rested in the Son, having assumed flesh, divinised it in uniting it to himself, and made it one with himself, so that the names of Father and Son apply to one and the same God. The personality of God cannot be duplicated; consequently, the Father suffered with the Son.<sup>33</sup>

For he will not say that the Father suffered, and that there is only one person, but he wishes to avoid blasphemy against the Father—this insensate and unstable man, who invents blasphemies from end to end for the sole pleasure of speaking against the truth, and who is not ashamed to fall now into the system of Sabellius, then into that of Theodotus.

<sup>33</sup> *Philos.* IX, xii, 16-19. Hippolytus then criticises Callistus for forgiving sinners. In Book X he returns to the Trinitarian doctrine of his enemy. X, xxvii, 3-4: "This heresy (of Noetus) has been defended by Callistus, whose life we have exactly related, and who himself brought forth a heresy: he started from that, and confessed that there is only one (god), the Father and Creator of the universe; He is Son inasmuch as he is so named, and receives this appellation, but in essence (*ousia*) there is only (one spirit); for, says he, God is not a spirit other than the Word, nor the Word other than God: there is therefore only one single person, distinguished in name but not in essence. He says that this Word is the sole God, and that He was incarnate. And he will have it that the one we see and touch in the flesh is the Son, and He who dwells in him the Father, now being wrecked on the doctrine of Noetus, and at other times on that of Theodotus, and never holding anything for certain."

With these texts we must compare Tertullian, *Adv. Prax.*, xxvii: "(The Monarchians) led astray by the distinction between Father and Son, which, while maintaining their unity, we show to be that which exists between the sun and its ray, or the spring and the river, . . . endeavour to interpret it according to their doctrine in such a way that in one single person they distinguish the Father and the Son, saying that the Son is the flesh, that is the man or Jesus, and the Father is the spirit, that is God or the Christ. And thus those who maintain that the Father and the Son are one and the same go on to divide rather than to unite these. For if Jesus is one and Christ is another, then the Son will be one and the Father another, for the Son is Jesus, and the Father is Christ. They learnt this 'monarchy' perhaps from Valentine. . . ."

*Ibid.*, xxix: "You blaspheme, not only because you say that the Father died, but also that He was crucified. . . . The Father therefore did not suffer in and with the Son. Fearing directly to blaspheme the Father, they think they can lessen the blasphemy thus—having agreed that the Father and the Son are two—by saying that the Son suffered, and that the Father suffered with (*compassus est*). But there also they are foolish. For what is to suffer with, if not to suffer with another? If then the Father is impassible, he is also incapable of compassion."

D'Alès (*Hippol.*, pp. 16-18) remarks in connection with these texts that the *Adversus Praxeian* can hardly be later than Zephyrinus, and hence Callistus did

*Attitude of Zephyrinus and Callistus*

After reading all these texts, we should naturally like to determine the doctrinal position taken by the bishops of Rome in the controversy. We cannot do so with complete certainty. But there are some things that can be said. Towards those whom Hippolytus describes as Modalists, the attitude of the bishops varied: they were indulgent to Cleomenes and permitted the faithful to frequent his school; on the other hand they excommunicated Sabellius. We can infer from this that the teaching of these two men was not identical. Hippolytus gives us no exact information concerning Cleomenes; there is nothing to show that he subscribed to the errors of Noetus, and the toleration extended to him makes this hardly likely. Zephyrinus seems to have had little interest for these theological discussions; he intervened only under pressure from Callistus; his interventions, however, were irreproachable.

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not need to invent Patricompassionism during his pontificate, for it was anterior to it; "the description of Patricompassionism does not exactly correspond to that in the *Philosophumena*, it shows the divinity as such affected by suffering. Taking the testimony of the *Philosophumena* literally, it would seem that Callistus modified, in a less inacceptable sense, the doctrines already denounced as heretical. The statement of Tertullian, so far as we can understand it, does not concern him. We know, moreover, that Tertullian did not like the Roman clergy, and would not feel obliged to deal tenderly with Callistus in the *De Pudicitia*." Amann, on the other hand, writes (col. 2508): "This doctrine (of Callistus) is strictly the same as that combated by Tertullian at the end of his treatise *Contra Praxean*, and which Franzelin rightly regards as heretical. Whether Callistus taught it is another question, and one would have to be very partial to accept straightway this isolated accusation on the part of a bitter anagonist."

The divergence stressed by D'Alès between the two forms of Patricompassionism may be exact, but the account given by Hippolytus is not sufficiently explicit to establish it with certainty. For the rest, the two doctrines were in agreement: both presented themselves as a modification of the Patripassionism of Noetus; both, while maintaining the unity of person, found the duality of subjects on the Incarnation: He whom one sees and touches is the Son, Jesus; He who dwells in him is the Father, the divinity, and as Tertullian puts it, the Christ. Both wish to avoid blasphemy against the Father, and for this reason they say that He suffered *with* the Son.

In this doctrine, as in that of Noetus, we recognise the vestiges of earlier doctrines: the conception of the God who becomes double and becomes his own Son doubtless comes from the Gnostics, whence also comes the Christological dualism which, in Patricompassionism, distinguishes between Jesus and the Christ. Finally, the ambiguity of theological language served also the Monarchians, the word "spirit" signifying sometimes a person, sometimes the divine nature (cf. *Hist. du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, especially p. 305 and p. 573). But these details are only dialectical subtleties; what gave prestige to their doctrine was the "monarchy" which they claimed to safeguard.

It would be more interesting for us to know the doctrinal position of Callistus, but the difficulties here are greater. The testimony of his antagonist is too impassioned for us to accept it blindly; it is certain, moreover, from this very testimony, that Callistus excommunicated Sabellius. Hippolytus tells us that he was himself regarded as a ditheist, and the reproach was not without foundation, but he nowhere says that he was condemned, as was Sabellius; he seems to have seceded of his own accord. This severity towards Sabellius on the one hand and tolerance towards Hippolytus on the other would be incomprehensible if Callistus had really held the doctrine attributed to him by Hippolytus.<sup>34</sup>

### *Theology of Hippolytus*

The study of the doctrine of Hippolytus is facilitated by the writings which have come down to us.<sup>35</sup> Considered as a whole, this doctrine recalls that of the majority of the apologists, as for instance that of St. Justin, but it aggravates its defects.<sup>36</sup> The generation of

<sup>34</sup> Duchesne (*Hist. anc. de l' Eglise*, Vol. I, p. 315), after explaining Patri-compassionism according to Hippolytus and Tertullian, very rightly remarks: "The modification is very slight, and we do not understand how Callistus could have accepted responsibility for it after condemning Sabellius. Controversialists always tend to misrepresent the opinions they combat, and to compromise their opponents with regrettable doctrinal connections. It is, of course, possible that the mistrust aroused by the theology of the Logos, the fear of ditheism, the preponderating preoccupation of the divine unity, combined with the imperfection of technical terminology, may have sometimes led, in the orthodox camp, to unsatisfactory conceptions and above all to expressions open to criticism."

We may also bear in mind what Harnack says, *Dogmengeschichte*, Vol. I, p. 740, n. 2: "Hippolytus did not hide the fact that the bishops had on their side the great mass of the Roman community (IX, xi), but he saw everywhere hypocrisy, bitterness, and flattery, whereas to-day we can see that the bishops wished to preserve the unity and peace of their flock from the *rabies theologorum*. In this they simply carried out the duty of their office, and they acted in the spirit of their predecessors, in whose times was required only the recognition of the short and broad confession of faith, freedom being left to those who accepted this. We see again that Hippolytus stands for simple people such as Zephyrinus and the rest, because he does not wish to launch out into the new science, with its 'economic' conception of God."

<sup>35</sup> The most important texts are ch. x-xv of the *Adversus Noetum*, and in the *Philosophumena*, ch. xxxii-xxxiv of Book X. Cf. D'Alès, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-31; Amann, art. *Hippolyte*, in *Dict. de Theol. cath.*, col. 2508. These two documents are compared together by D'Alès, *op. cit.*, p. 23 and n. 2. In the *Philosophumena*, written some twenty years after the *Adversus Noetum*, we have a riper thought, especially in the chapters quoted above; these form the conclusion of the work, and are very carefully written; the theology of Hippolytus here appears in a more finished form, and its errors and omissions are more obvious.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. D'Alès, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-31.

the Word is closely attached to the creation of the world, and further, to the Incarnation; it is described as a progressive development, in which three periods can be distinguished. At the commencement, God alone was, but "though He was alone, He was multiple, for He was not without word, wisdom, power, or counsel."<sup>37</sup> At the same time, this multiplicity did not as yet imply several distinct persons; the personality of the Logos was constituted only in view of the creation: "As head, counsellor and instrument of creation, God engendered the Logos. This Logos, which He had in him invisibly, was made visible by Him when pronouncing the first word. It is a light which arises from another light. . . . In this way there was another with respect to God."<sup>38</sup> This generation, however, is still incomplete; it will be perfected only by the Incarnation: "It was not as non-incarnate, or as in Himself, that the Logos was perfect Son, although He was perfect Logos and Only-begotten; and similarly the flesh could not subsist without the Logos, because it is in the Logos it has its subsistence. Hence it is in this way that the perfect Son of God was manifested."<sup>39</sup> This idea of the generation of the Word developing in stages introduced into the very being of God a succession and a progress which the Church could not admit; she also had to repudiate with energy another error of Hippolytus, making the generation of the Word a free act of God like the creation: "If He had willed to make thee God He could have done so: thou hast the example of the Logos; but, willing to make thee man, He made thee man."<sup>40</sup>

These are certainly very grave errors. Yet it would be very unjust to regard Hippolytus as an Arian before Arius: not only does he recognise in Christ the "God who reigns over all things,"<sup>41</sup>

<sup>37</sup> *Adv. Noet.*, x; cf. *Philos.*, X, xxxii, 1, and xxxiii, 1.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, x-xi; cf. *Philos.*, X, xxxiii.

<sup>39</sup> We find the same doctrine again in the conclusion of the *Epistle to Diognetus*, xi, 5. We know that this conclusion (chs. xi-xii) was written by a different author from the rest of the letter; several historians attribute it to Hippolytus, and think they recognise in it the last page of the *Philosophumena*. Cf. D'Alès, *op. cit.*, p. 27, n. 1.

<sup>40</sup> *Philos.*, X, xxxiii, 7. This error was a consequence of the cosmological conception of the Trinity; the connection imagined between the generation of the Word and the creation of the world always involved the risk of making this generation a free and contingent act like creation; the apologists of the second century sometimes allowed themselves to lean towards this error (cf. *Hist. du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, p. 461); Tertullian still more (*Adv. Prax.*, iv and x; cf. D'Alès, *Hippolyte*, p. 27); Hippolytus clearly succumbed to it. Cf. *Adv. Noet.*, xvi.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, X, xxxiv, 5.

but he marks very clearly the boundary between creatures who are drawn from nothing, and the Logos "who is divine in essence, and consequently is God."<sup>42</sup> From this fundamental principle Hippolytus could have deduced the whole Christian doctrine, but he did not do so. The Church accepted the principle and also drew conclusions from it.

Hippolytus' doctrine concerning the Holy Spirit was still more imperfect. In the concluding portion of the *Philosophumena* there is no mention of Him.<sup>43</sup> In the book against Noetus, Trinitarian formulae are fairly numerous;<sup>44</sup> they are interesting in that they manifest a faith already received and supported by a liturgical usage;<sup>45</sup> but they do not reveal the theology of Hippolytus himself. All the passages in which this is expressed present the Holy Spirit as a force rather than a person; it is above all remarkable that, in spite of the parallelism to which the above-mentioned texts would lead the author, he avoids putting the three persons on the same plane.<sup>46</sup> All these traits unite in justifying the accusation of ditheism made against Hippolytus by Callistus.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, X, xxxiii, 8.

<sup>43</sup> Döllinger explained this silence by the esoteric nature of belief in the Holy Spirit; Hagemann (*op. cit.*, p. 269) has well refuted him. In the other books of the *Philosophumena*, we find a few very vague references to the Holy Spirit (D'Alès, *op. cit.*, p. 30, n. 4).

<sup>44</sup> Ch. viii: "We must confess God the Father almighty, and Christ Jesus, Son of God, made man, to whom the Father has subjected all things save himself and the Holy Spirit, and (confess that) these are really three (*τρία*)."<sup>xii</sup>: "We see the incarnate Logos, through him we conceive the Father, we believe the Son, we adore the Holy Spirit."<sup>xiv</sup>: "The Father commands, the Son obeys, and the Holy Spirit instructs; the Father is above all; the Son is by all; the Holy Spirit is in all. And we cannot conceive one only God if we do not truly believe in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. . . . The Father willed, the Son made, the Spirit manifested. It is by this trinity (*τριάδος*) that the Father is glorified."<sup>xviii</sup>, conclusion of the book: "It is He who is the God made man for us, to whom the Father has subjected all things. To him be glory and power with the Father and the Holy Spirit in the holy Church, now and always and for ever and ever Amen."

<sup>45</sup> On these Trinitarian doxologies in Hippolytus, cf. *supra*, p. 697, n. 17.

<sup>46</sup> *Adv. Noet*, xiv: "I will not say two Gods, but one only, but two Persons, and in the 'economy' a third rank, the grace of the Holy Spirit. For the Father is one, and there are two Persons, because there is also the Son, and in the third place the Holy Spirit." *Ibid.*: "The Jews glorified the Father, but did not give him thanks, because they did not know the Son; the disciples knew the Son but not in the Holy Spirit, and that is why they denied him."

<sup>47</sup> On the Christology of Hippolytus, cf. the long note by Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte*, Vol. I, pp. 606-608.

*Martyrdom of Hippolytus and of Pontianus*

This brief outline of the theology of Hippolytus has revealed the many influences which left their mark upon it. We find there the Subordinationism of the apologists, more definite and more dangerous than it was in them; we find there, on the other hand, some features of the Christology of Irenæus,<sup>48</sup> and his exegetical method in its boldness already anticipates Origen.<sup>49</sup> We may add that this controversialist, so mistrustful in regard to Greek philosophy, yet borrowed much from Hellenism. His mind was agile rather than steady, he was an impassioned controversialist and a brilliant writer, yet without depth, and by his qualities and failings he represents the proud science which then set itself against the common faith; faced with the bishops of Rome, Zephyrinus and Callistus, who retained around them the great mass of their faithful, he drew apart and seceded, taking his little church with him. The persecution of Maximin led to his deportation to Sardinia together with the pope Pontianus in 235; this brought him back to his duty and to contact with his legitimate head. Pontianus resigned his charge; Hippolytus doubtless did the same; both died as martyrs, and their bodies, taken back to Rome, were similarly honoured by the Church.<sup>50</sup>

*Life and Works of Hippolytus*

Hippolytus, who has been the subject of the preceding pages, was for many centuries a personage surrounded with a certain mystery. Eusebius<sup>51</sup> and St. Jerome<sup>52</sup> knew of him and also of several of his works; they knew that he was a bishop, but neither could say of what church. Pope Damasus regarded him as an adherent of the Novatian schism. The poet Prudentius repeated this, and added to it the torture of the son of Theseus: Hippolytus was torn to pieces by wild horses.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>48</sup> E.g. in the *De Christo et Antichristo*, iii and lxi; cf. D'Alès, *op. cit.*, p. 38; Harnack, *loc. cit.*, quoting Overbeck, *Quaest. Hippol. Specimen*, 1864.

<sup>49</sup> Hippolytus was in fact in personal touch with Origen; St. Jerome says that it was in Origen's presence that Hippolytus pronounced the homily *De laude Domini Salvatoris*. Cf. Bk. IV, ch. xxiv, § 1.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. D'Alès, *Hippolyte*, p. 7.

<sup>51</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xx.

<sup>52</sup> *De viris illustribus*, lxi.

<sup>53</sup> All these doubtful and contradictory elements are set forth by D'Alès, *Théologie de saint Hippolyte*, Introduction, pp. i-xlvi.

In 1551 there was exhumed, on the site of the ancient cemetery on the Tiburtine way, a mutilated statue which was recognised as that of Hippolytus; "on the sides of the chair is carved, in Greek characters, a Paschal cycle which starts from the first year of Alexander Severus (222) and covers a period of a hundred and twelve years; on one of the steps is a list of works. . . . This list of works, inscribed in marble in the third century, presents an exceptional interest for the history of Christian origins."<sup>54</sup> This statue, erected during the lifetime of Hippolytus by his admirers, tells us of the works composed by him previous to its erection, that is, apparently, prior to 224.<sup>55</sup>

### *The Philosophumena*

In 1842, Mynoides Mynas brought to Paris from Mount Athos the manuscript of the *Philosophumena*. Miller edited it in 1851 under the name of Origen, which was on the MS.; in 1859 Duncker and Schneidewin brought out a new edition, under the name of Hippolytus. This attribution, after a little hesitation, has been accepted by all historians. Much light has thus been thrown on his life, hitherto so obscure.

Hippolytus was a priest at Rome under Zephyrinus; he broke with the Church at the coming of Callistus (217). Under Maximin, in 235, he was condemned, at the same time as the bishop Pontianus, to deportation to Sardinia, where he died. His martyrdom wiped out at Rome the stain of his schism; yet its memory persisted sufficiently to cause him to be regarded later on as a partisan of the Novatian schism. His ecclesiastical position, and the fact that his works were written in Greek, separated him from the Roman tradition; hence the uncertainty concerning his see and his life.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>54</sup> D'Alès, *op. cit.*, p. iii; cf. pp. xliii *et seq.*

<sup>55</sup> This Paschal cycle, attributed to Hippolytus, was some five hours in advance annually on lunar time; already in the year 236 there was a difference of two days between the true full moon and that indicated in the rule of Hippolytus. It is hardly likely that it would have been engraved on the marble when its inexactitude was already recognised, and still less likely that the statue was erected after 235, when Hippolytus's confession had obliterated his schism and reconciled his followers with the Church. In 222 on the other hand, the year of the death of St. Callistus, the error in the reckoning was not yet apparent (it would have been noticeable only in 224), and the schism set in violent opposition this little group of believers and their bishop on the one hand and the great Church on the other.

<sup>56</sup> These few points are now beyond question; the date of his birth is less certain; Tixeront puts it about 170-175, a likely conjecture. But if we admit that



## The Apostolic Tradition

We have already mentioned among the works of Hippolytus the *Apostolic Tradition*. It calls for further treatment. Of all his works this has been the most difficult to identify, yet it surpasses the others in interest.

It was long known under the title of the *Egyptian Church Order*,<sup>57</sup> and had to be separated out from a whole series of collections of canons dealing with discipline and liturgy, and belonging for the most part to the fourth century.<sup>58</sup>

The merit of this identification belongs chiefly to Dom Con-

Hippolytus knew Irenæus in Rome (before 177), the date must be put earlier.

The most important works are: *De Christo et Antichristo*, about 200; *In Daniele*, between 200 and 204; *Adversus Noetum*, between 200 and 210; *Traditio apostolica*, about 217; *Philosophumena*, after 222; *Adversus haeresim Artemonis*, about 230; *Chronica*, after 234. Cf. D'Alès, *op. cit.*, pp. xlvii-xlviii.

<sup>57</sup> This work no longer exists in its original text. We possess several versions: the earliest and most faithful is a Latin translation discovered in a palimpsest at Verona; unfortunately, this palimpsest is mutilated and lacks several sheets; it has been edited by Hauler, *Didascalie Apostolorum fragmenta Veronensia latina*, Leipzig, 1900. Three Eastern versions—Coptic, Ethiopic and Arabic—give us another recension of this work. An English edition of these three versions has been published by Horner, *Statutes of the Apostles*, London, 1904. Complete edition, English and Latin, by Dom H. Connolly, *The So-called Egyptian Church Order and Derived Documents*, in *Texts and Studies*, VIII, 4, 1916, pp. 175-194. Latin translation from the Coptic version in Funk, *Didascalia et Constitutiones Apostolorum*, II (Paderborn, 1905), pp. 97-119. Duchesne gives the *Apostolic Tradition* in great part in the fifth edition of his *Origines du Culte chrétien*, 1920, pp. 545-556.

[A new English version, with excellent Historical Introduction by Gregory Dix, was published by the S.P.C.K. in 1937, under the title *The Apostolic Tradition of St. Hippolytus of Rome*.—TR.]

<sup>58</sup> These are: the *Canons of Hippolytus*, translated from Greek into Coptic, and from Coptic into Arabic. Latin translation by Dom Haneberg, Munich, 1870; reproduced and commented by Achelis, *Die Ältesten Quellen des orientalischen Kirchenrechtes*, Leipzig, 1891; German translation by Riedel, *Die Kirchenrechtsquellen des Patriarchats Alexandrien*, 1900, pp. 193-230.

Next, the *Apostolic Constitutions*. This collection is mentioned for the first time in pseudo-Ignatius, *Ad Trall.*, vii, 3; it was drawn up by the writer who interpolated the letters of Ignatius at the end of the fourth century. The first six books are a modification of the *Didascalia Apostolorum* (cf. *supra* p. 713); the seventh is in great part a reproduction of the *Didache*; the eighth, which alone concerns us here, depends on the *Apostolic Tradition*. Ed. Funk, *Didascalia et Constitutiones Apostolorum*, Vol. I, 1905.

Thirdly, the *Epitome*, an abridged redaction of the *Apostolic Constitutions*, but reproducing the original text of Hippolytus for the ordination of bishops and lectors. Ed. Funk, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 77-84.

Fourthly, the *Testament of Our Lord Jesus Christ*. Syriac text, ed. Rahmani, Mayence, 1899.

nolly.<sup>59</sup> He showed that what was called the *Egyptian Church Order* is in reality the *Apostolic Tradition* of St. Hippolytus, from which are derived, independently of each other, the *Canons of St. Hippolytus*, the *Apostolic Constitutions*, followed by the *Epitome*, and the *Testament*.

This thesis, received at first with some hesitation,<sup>60</sup> gradually met with more and more acceptance, and has finally become the general view.<sup>61</sup> It is, in fact, established by decisive arguments,<sup>62</sup> but must always be understood with certain reservations. Canonical collections are, more than any other works, exposed to modifications; they do not bear the personal mark of one writer, and they present a legislation and a formulary which may have been modified in the course of time. The work which we are examining must be studied the more carefully because the original text is lacking and is represented by two groups of versions, one of which is incomplete and the other not very faithful.<sup>63</sup>

In our own quotations from this work of Hippolytus, we shall take care always to use the Latin version of Verona or the text of the *Epitome* for portions in which it reproduces the original text. Having said this we can now study this early liturgy in its chief features.

<sup>59</sup> He established this identification in 1916 in the book mentioned above (p. 744, n. 57). He had been preceded in this path by E. von der Goltz in 1906, and by E. Schwartz in 1910. The three workers did not know of each other's labours till afterwards. Connolly's work is the most complete, and it is the one which had a decisive effect.

<sup>60</sup> Tixeront, *Patrologie*, p. 283, is cautious, so also Watkins, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 131.

<sup>61</sup> D'Alès, *Recherches de Sc. relig.*, Vol. VIII, 1918, pp. 132-148; Wilmart, in *Revue du Clergé français*, Vol. XCVI, pp. 95-116; Amann, art. *Hippolyte*, in *Dict. de Théol. cath.*, col. 2503; Cabrol, art. *Hippolyte*, in *Dict. d'Archéol. et de Liturgie*, col. 2411; Duchesne, in 5th edn. of *Origines du culte chrétien* (*supra*, p. 744, n. 57).

<sup>62</sup> The Paschal fast still consists only of one or two days, as in the ancient custom. The *Canons* and the *Apostolic Constitutions* recognise a fast of forty days. The Eucharist is still received and reserved at home. To the neophytes at their first communion is given a drink of water and honey. To these features, which bear witness to the early date of the document, we must add those which speak of Roman usages or expressions familiar to Hippolytus. They will be found in Dom Connolly's work, especially pp. 55-135.

<sup>63</sup> Thus, in a Latin translation made by Funk from the Coptic, we find this Creed which the deacon gives to the neophyte he is going to baptise: "Credo in Deum unum verum, Patrem omnipotentem, et in Filium ejus unigenitum Jesum Christum, Dominum et Salvatorem nostrum, et in Spiritum ejus Sanctum, omnia vivificantem, trinitatem consubstantialem, deitatem, unam, . . ." (ed. Funk, p. 110). We cannot expect to find in Hippolytus: "trinitas consubstantialis."

*The Liturgy of Hippolytus*

The *Apostolic Tradition* of St. Hippolytus is the earliest liturgical collection we possess. As we have remarked elsewhere,<sup>64</sup> the prayers of St. Clement, the *Didache* and St. Polycarp do not give us liturgical formulæ imposed authoritatively by the Church, but prayers of free inspiration, though composed on traditional themes. The descriptions in St. Justin of the Sunday Mass and the baptismal Mass<sup>65</sup> explicitly testify to the place still open for the improvisation of the celebrant. In Hippolytus things are no longer the same; we have a liturgical usage already codified.<sup>66</sup> It is true that the book containing it was drawn up by Hippolytus when a schismatic, and was intended by him for his little church. At the same time, as we have seen, Hippolytus was in no wise an innovator; he set himself up as a champion of tradition, and we can allow that as a whole the liturgical usage he codified was the traditional one; in certain details he modified or stressed the formulæ in accordance with his personal preferences, but he respected its main features.<sup>67</sup>

The first liturgical function which Hippolytus describes is the consecration of a bishop. The bishop is chosen by all the people. When he has been named and unanimously accepted, the people are called together on a Sunday, together with the *presbyterium* and all the bishops present. All consenting (the bishops) lay hands on him, the *presbyterium* standing by in silence. All pray silently, asking for the descent of the Spirit. One of the bishops present, at the request of all, imposes hands on the bishop he is to consecrate, saying this prayer:

O God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Father of mercies and God of all consolation, who dwellest on high in the heavens and yet regardest those here below, who knowest all things before they come to be . . . Thou, Father, who knowest the heart, grant to thy servant, whom thou hast chosen for the episcopate, to feed thy holy flock, to present before thy eyes the primacy of the priesthood, serving Thee without reproach day and night, and that he may unceasingly implore the clemency of thy countenance, and distribute according to thy

<sup>64</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 696.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. *supra*, Bk. II, p. 463-465.

<sup>66</sup> Even so, in one passage we still find room left for personal initiative. This text has been mentioned above, p. 697 and n. 18.

<sup>67</sup> A detailed study of this by Dom Cabrol will be found in the *Dictionnaire d'Archéologie*, Vol. VI, col. 2409-2419.

commands, and loose all that is bound according to the power Thou hast given to the apostles;<sup>68</sup> may he please Thee by meekness and purity of heart, offering Thee an odour of sweetness by thy child Jesus Christ, through whom be glory, power and honour to Thee, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and for ever and ever.<sup>69</sup>

Immediately after his consecration, the new bishop is given the kiss of peace by all, then he celebrates the Eucharistic sacrifice. Describing this Pontifical Mass, Hippolytus gives us its anaphora. This venerable text deserves to be quoted:

We render thee thanks, O God, through thy beloved child<sup>70</sup> Jesus Christ, whom in these last times thou has sent us as Saviour, Redeemer, and messenger of thy will; Who is thine inseparable Word, through whom Thou madest all things, and in whom Thou wert well pleased. Thou didst send Him from heaven into the womb of the Virgin, where He was incarnate and manifested as thy Son, born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin; fulfilling thy will and acquiring for thee a holy people, He extended his hands in his passion, in order to deliver from suffering those who have believed in Thee. And when He was betrayed voluntarily to his passion, in order to destroy death, break the chains of the devil, tread hell under his feet, enlighten the just, fix a term, and manifest the resurrection, taking bread and giving thanks to thee, He said: "Take, eat, this is my body which is broken for you." And likewise the chalice, saying, "This is my blood, which is shed for you: when you do this, you make a memory of me." We therefore, remembering his death and resurrection, offer to Thee the bread and the chalice, giving Thee thanks that thou hast deigned to allow us to appear before Thee and to serve Thee. And we beg Thee to send thy

<sup>68</sup> We call attention to this mention of the power of the keys; it shows that, though Hippolytus was opposed to the reforms of Callistus, he did not question the power which bishops have of forgiving sins.

<sup>69</sup> This doxology seems to be overlaid: Christ occurs in it twice, as the Mediator ("through whom . . .") and as the object of the doxology with the Father and the Holy Spirit. This complication would seem not to be primitive, but to be due probably to the translators into Ethiopic or Latin. Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 623-625.

<sup>70</sup> Here, as in the preceding text, we give "child" as the equivalent of the Latin word "puer," which corresponds to the Greek *παῖς*. This last term, which signifies "servant" as well as "child," comes from the Septuagint, which applies it to the Messiah, the "servant of Jahveh." From thence it passed into certain texts of the New Testament, and then into some of the early Fathers, the *Didache*, Barnabas, Athenagoras, Clement of Alexandria; cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. I, p. 346; Vol. II, pp. 180, 395, 496, 502. When Christian writers apply the term to Christ, it is usually in the sense of "child." That is the sense the word has here.

Holy Spirit upon the oblation of the holy Church and, gathering all together in one, grant to all the saints who partake, to be filled with the Holy Spirit and to be strengthened in the faith in truth, so that we may praise and glorify Thee by thy child Jesus Christ, through whom be glory and honour to Thee, Father and Son, with the Holy Spirit, in thy holy Church, now and for ever and ever.

In this fine prayer we may detect here and there the personal stamp of Hippolytus.<sup>71</sup> But as a whole it is profoundly traditional, and is in the first place the thanksgiving or Eucharist properly so called. The supreme blessing for which the Church gives thanks to God is the Incarnation of the Word, and the Redemption which is its fruit. The mention of the glorious Passion of the Lord introduces the narrative of the Last Supper, in which occur the words of consecration, and then a very brief *anamnesis* recalls the death and resurrection of the Lord. Lastly, we have the offering of the consecrated gifts, and the *epiclesis* or invocation of the Holy Spirit: the Church asks that the Holy Spirit, coming down on the oblation, may consecrate the unity of Christians and strengthen their faith.<sup>72</sup>

This Eucharistic liturgy, so strongly rooted in the past, had a great influence on later liturgical tradition, especially in the West.<sup>73</sup>

After consecration of the bishop and the Eucharistic anaphora, we must mention the baptismal liturgy of Hippolytus. This text has all the more interest because in the baptismal formula we find the baptismal creed: <sup>74</sup>

(The catechumen is to go down into the water, and the priest is to lay his hand on his head, and ask him: "Dost thou believe in God,

<sup>71</sup> For instance, the addition of the words "in the holy Church" to the doxology, cf. *supra*, p. 697. The idea that in the Incarnation the Word appeared as Son is peculiar to Hippolytus: cf. *Adv. Noet.*, iv, and *supra* p. 740. Christ "extending his hands in his passion" is a phrase dear to Hippolytus, so also the expression "ut resurrectionem manifestet." Cf. *Philosophumena*, X, xxxiii, 17.

<sup>72</sup> On this *epiclesis*, cf. Lietzmann, *Messe und Herrenmahl*, pp. 80-81. See also the interesting discussion between J. W. Turner and Dom Connolly concerning the meaning of this *epiclesis*, in *Journal of Theol. Studies*, Vol. XXV, pp. 139-150 and 337-364, also the article by Dom Casel in *Jahrbuch für Liturgiewissenschaft*, Vol. IV, pp. 169-178.

<sup>73</sup> "We can say that all liturgies can be reduced to two primitive forms: the Roman liturgy of Hippolytus, and the Egyptian liturgy. This is the most important result of the preceding study" (Lietzmann, *Messe und Herrenmahl*, p. 174). The starting point for the study of these two liturgies is, on the one hand, the text of Hippolytus, and on the other the anaphora of Serapion. The latter belongs to the fourth century, and does not come within the scope of this book.

<sup>74</sup> Here, as always, the testimony of Hippolytus is found in two main forms, the Eastern, found in the Ethiopic, Arabic and Coptic versions; the other Western,

the Father Almighty?" And the one to be baptised is to reply: "I believe in Him.")

Holding his hand on his head, the priest baptises him the first time.

Afterwards he says:

"Dost thou believe in Christ Jesus, Son of God, who was born of the Virgin Mary by the operation of the Holy Spirit, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, died and was buried, rose again the third day, living from among the dead, ascended into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of the Father, from whence He shall come to judge the living and the dead?"

And when he replies: "I believe in this," he shall be baptised a second time.

Then the priest says: "Dost thou believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Church, and the resurrection of the flesh?"

The one to be baptised shall say: "I believe in this," and shall be baptised a third time.

Then, when he comes out of the water, the priest shall anoint him with consecrated oil, saying: "I anoint thee with holy oil, in the name of Jesus Christ." Then all shall dry themselves, dress, and enter the church. The bishop shall then lay hands on them, saying this prayer:

"O Lord God, who has deigned to forgive these their sins through the laver of regeneration of the Holy Spirit, shed upon them thy grace, that they may serve Thee according to thy will, for thine is the glory, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in the holy Church, now and for ever, Amen."

Then, spreading some of the consecrated oil on their heads with his hand, he shall say: "I anoint thee with holy oil in the name of the Lord God Almighty, and of Christ Jesus, and of the Holy Spirit." And signing their foreheads, he shall give them a kiss, saying: "The Lord be with thee." And the one who has been signed shall reply: "And with thy spirit." And so he shall do for each of them.

Thereafter, they shall pray with all the people; they do not pray with the faithful until they have received everything. After the prayer, they exchange the kiss of peace.<sup>75</sup>

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found in the Latin version. The last mentioned is the earliest and most authoritative witness to the work of Hippolytus, and it is the one we follow. It has a lacuna at the beginning, caused by the loss of some sheets of the Verona palimpsest; a conjectural restoration of the text from the other versions is included above, between brackets.

<sup>75</sup> This text will be found in Dom Connolly, *op. cit.*, p. 185. On the baptismal creed, cf. Connolly, *On the text of the baptismal Creed of Hippolytus*, in *Journal of Theol. Studies*, Vol. XXV, 1924, pp. 131-139; D. B. Capelle, *Le symbole romain au IIe siècle*, in *Revue bénédictine*, Vol. XXXIX, 1927, pp. 33-44; *Les origines du symbol romain*, in *Recherches de Théol. ancienne*, Vol. II, 1930, pp. 5-20; and *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 162-166.

This liturgical formula gives us a description of the baptismal rite in all its details: baptism is administered usually by immersion; <sup>76</sup> this immersion is repeated three times, <sup>77</sup> accompanied each time by an interrogation and a reply: the neophyte professes his faith in each of the persons of the holy Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. <sup>78</sup>

The baptismal rite concludes with an anointing with consecrated oil. The minister of the sacrament is the priest.

Then begins the office of the bishop: he lays hands on the newly baptised, anoints their heads, and signs their foreheads. Here we have the sacrament of confirmation, conferred after baptism. <sup>79</sup>

<sup>76</sup> In Bk. II (p. 342) we quoted the text of the *Didache*, VII, which prescribes baptism by immersion as a general rule, but allows baptism by infusion if water is lacking. In the third century, baptism by infusion was administered to the sick. Cyprian defended its validity (*Épist.* LXIX, 12-16); but Pope Cornelius, discussing the case of Novatian, considered that those so baptised ought not to be admitted into the ranks of the clergy (*apud* Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xliii, 17). Same decision in canon 12 of the Council of Neocaesarea (314-315), in Mansi, II, 542; Hefele-Leclercq, *Histoire des Conciles*, Vol. I, p. 333. Cf. d'Alès, *De Baptismo*, p. 39.

<sup>77</sup> In the text of the *Didache* mentioned above (n. 76), a triple infusion is similarly prescribed in baptism by infusion. The rite of triple immersion is frequently mentioned in documents of the third and fourth centuries. Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 138-144.

<sup>78</sup> In the text of Hippolytus we have no baptismal formula other than these interrogations and replies. Dom de Puniet, after quoting other similar texts, infers (*Dict. d'Archéol.*, art. *Baptême*, col. 342): "It is difficult for us to avoid the impression that in certain places, at any rate, the interrogations *de fide* containing the express mention of the three divine persons took the place of the baptismal formula. Confining ourselves to the early documents, that is the hypothesis which best explains the double peculiarity pointed out above." P. D'Alès (*De Baptismo*, p. 59) observes that this opinion was held by the well-known liturgical scholars Dom du Frische (1693) and Dom Le Nourry (1724). He adds: "Illa sententia, nuper instaurata a P. de Puniet, nostro iudicio videtur posse defendi."

<sup>79</sup> Cf. D'Alès, in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. VII, 1918, p. 137, n. 3. Amongst other Roman features of this liturgy, he stresses "the presence in the baptismal ritual of two distinct functions: the first is given by the priest to the neophyte coming up from the baptismal piscina, the other is reserved for the bishop, and takes place after the imposition of hands. The first is a secondary rite of baptism, in the other we recognise the sacrament of confirmation. This distinction, which would be looked for in vain in documents of Latin Africa, appears in a Roman document of the year 416, the famous decretal of Pope Innocent I to Decentius, Bishop of Iguvium. The text of Hippolytus gives us the first testimony to this, two centuries earlier."

A new study of this question will be found in the article by P. Van den Eynde, *Baptême et confirmation d'après les Constitutions apostoliques*, VII, 44, 3, *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XXVII, 1937, pp. 196-212, especially pp. 205-208. Cf. P. Galtier, *Imposition des mains et bénédictions au baptême*, *ibid.*, pp. 464-466.

## CHAPTER XVIII

# THE CHURCH AND THE ROMAN STATE FROM SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS TO DECIUS (193-249)<sup>1</sup>

## § 1. THE PERSECUTION UNDER SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS

*New Features in the Relations Between the Church and the Roman State after the Accession of Septimius Severus* (193)

A NEW period began in the relations between the Church and the Roman state with the reign of Septimius Severus, whose accession (193) practically coincided with the important pontificate of Pope Victor (189-199), successor to Eleutherius. It did not see the abolition of the legislative régime to which Christians had been

<sup>1</sup> Bibliography.—Same general bibliography as for Chs. VIII and IX. The *Ausgewählte Martyrakten* of Knoff appeared in a 3rd edn. in 1929, revised by G. Krüger.

On the persecution under Septimius Severus, consult A. de Ceuleneer, *Essai sur la vie et le règne de Septime Sévère*, in *Mémoires de l'Académie royale de Belgique*, Vol. XLIII, Brussels, 1880; C. Fuchs, *Geschichte des Kaisers L. Septimius Severus*, Vienna, 1884; M. Platnauer, *Life and Reign of the Emperor Lucius Septimius Severus*, Oxford, 1918; J. Hesebrock, *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des Kaisers Septimius Severus*, Heidelberg, 1921; Fluss, *Severus*, in Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopädie*, 2nd series, Vol. II, 1922.

On Alexander Severus, see article *Aurelius*, no. 221, in Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopädie*, Vol. II, 1896; W. Thiele, *De Severo Alexandro imperatore*, Berlin, 1909; A. Jarde, *Etudes critiques sur la vie et le règne d'Alexandre Sévère*, Paris, 1925.

On the intellectual world in the time of the Severi, and its relations with Christianity: J. Reville, *La religion à Rome sous les Sévère*, Paris, 1886; K. Bihlmeyer, *Die syrischen Kaiser zu Rom (211-235) und das Christentum*, Rottenburg, 1916.

On the persecution under Maximin, see Hohl, article *Julius*, no. 526, in Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopädie*, Vol. X, 1917.

On the reign of Philip the Arab, see Stein, art. *Julius*, nos. 386 and 387 (*ibid.*).

On the general attitude of the Roman state with regard to Christianity, we may add the following to the works already mentioned in Bk. I: G. Costa, *Religione politica nell' Impero romano*, Rome, 1923; E. Ciccotti, *Il problema religioso nel mondo antico*, Milan, 1933; A. Pincherle, *Cristianesimo e Impero romano*, in *Rivista storica italiana*, series IV, Vol. IV, 1933, pp. 454 et seq.



subjected for more than a hundred years. Though the imperial authority had in the reign of Commodus indulged for the first time in a veritable act of tolerance, the principles themselves had not been modified, nor the old law abrogated. From one day to another the wheels of justice could always be set in motion against the faithful Christians as a result of private denunciations.

But with Septimius Severus a new step was taken, which many of his successors would follow: the public authority itself took the initiative in instituting proceedings, in varying circumstances. Trajan's rule, *conquirendi non sunt*, was abandoned; the era of persecution by edict began. But by comparison, proceedings arising from private accusation became rarer, and bade fair to cease altogether, so that the direct activities of authority in regard to Christians may have lessened those of private individuals by making them pointless or by removing occasions for their exercise, though on the contrary the action of public authority may possibly have led to a faint revival of private zeal which had been tending to die out.

Thus, from the end of the second century to the beginning of the fourth, the Church felt the shock of sudden and violent outbursts, often growing in violence, but finally ending in failure, each new defeat making still more apparent the impotency of the pagan Empire in regard to a movement which resembled the irresistible surge of the sea. Hence we find a series of sometimes lengthy periods of peace, disturbed from time to time by applications of the ancient régime, but always tending to greater stability.

### *Toleration During the First Part of the Reign*

At the beginning of this period, the ancient régime continued side by side with the first manifestations of the new policy. Hence we find in the reign of the emperor Septimius Severus Christians still subject, according to times and places, to the contrasted vicissitudes we have noted in the preceding period. The Emperor did not seem to be badly disposed towards them; Christians had access to the palace, though prepared to be molested there occasionally. One day the young Antoninus Caracalla, the heir to the throne, who had had a Christian nurse,<sup>2</sup> complained that one of his playmates

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<sup>2</sup> "Lacte christiano educatus," says Tertullian (*Apologeticus*, xvi).

had been whipped because he may have been a Christian.<sup>3</sup> The Syrian princesses of the imperial family, who were interested in religious matters, may have been curious about Christianity: but this can be stated definitely only of a niece of the emperor, Julia Mamaea, at the time when her son Alexander was in his turn placed on the throne.<sup>4</sup> Septimius Severus himself, according to Tertullian, one day led a manifestation of popular hostility against the Christians.<sup>5</sup> Also we find a severe application of the ancient legislation in various circumstances. Three works of Tertullian, written between 197 and 202, the *Exhortatio ad martyres*, the *Ad nationes*, and the *Apologeticus*, display great indignation at the spectacle of so many Christians of both sexes condemned for their faith in Africa, by governors who seem more than once to have been urged on by the popular hatred.

### *The Edict Forbidding Conversion to Christianity*

Between 200 and 202 we get a new fact: when leaving the East, where he had been occupied since 197 in the war against the Parthians, the Emperor resolved to put a stop both to Jewish and to Christian conversions. Did this result from the impressions produced in him by his stay of several years in the Levant (where nevertheless he had found a wife), and his growing feeling that these conversions were beginning to constitute a grave danger for the Empire? The biography of Septimius Severus gives the fact itself in concise but expressive terms, without, however, informing us of its reasons: "He forbid, under heavy penalties, people to become Jews, and enacted the same with regard to Christians."<sup>6</sup> In point of fact, this was no innovation in the case of Judaism, for the circumcision of anyone not a member of a Jewish family had long been prohibited; the novelty lay in the prohibition of Christian baptism.<sup>7</sup> Did it apply to all baptisms, even of the children of

<sup>3</sup> Spartianus, *Caracalla*, i, 6, says "ob judaicam religionem," which might at that epoch signify a Christian just as much as a Jew.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. below, p. 758.

<sup>5</sup> *Ad Scapulam*, iv. Cf. Aubé, *Histoire des persecutions de l'Eglise*, III: *Les chrétiens dans l'Empire romain de la fin des Antonins au milieu du IIIe siècle* (180-249), 2nd edn., pp. 92 et seq.

<sup>6</sup> *Historia Augusta: Severus*, xvii: "Judaeos fieri sub gravi poena vetuit; idem etiam de christianis sanxit."

<sup>7</sup> The exact date is not easy to determine. The *Vita Severi*, *loc. cit.*, puts the edict of Severus during the emperor's stay in Palestine in 202, after taking over

Christians? The connection with the measure concerning Jews seems rather to indicate that only fresh conversions were affected.

### *Application of the Edict*

Nevertheless, whether applied rigorously or only as intimidating Christians, the edict was calculated to arrest Christian propaganda. It did not have this effect, however, or else its application did not last for long, for the movement of conversions does not seem to have suffered any serious interruption. In any case, the Christian writers who narrate the facts of the persecution in this period do not divide them into events which followed the edict, and others which resulted from previous legislation.

It was, however, very probably the carrying-out of the new interdict which led to the disorganisation of that well-known centre of Christian teaching, the catechetical school of Alexandria.<sup>8</sup> Clement, its head, was obliged to leave. His disciple, Origen, whose father Leonides had just been martyred, courageously tried to reconstitute it, but met with great difficulties, and though he himself escaped death, several new converts instructed by him were executed. There were many other martyrs. The virgin Potamioena, who was burnt with her mother in a cauldron of burning tar, and Basilides, an apparitor of the prefect, decapitated at Alexandria, are among the best known.<sup>9</sup>

The persecution spread to the province of Africa, where it made illustrious victims such as Perpetua and Felicitas. These were two young women of Thuriburbo Minus, one a matron, and the other one of her slaves, who perished at Carthage with four other Christians, two being young men, Saturninus and Secundulus, and the others being Revocatus the slave, and their catechist Saturus. That was on March 7th, 203, under the provisional government of the procurator Hilarianus, who took the place of the proconsul. Perpetua herself wrote the account of her last days, and when the

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the consulate at Antioch. But as Severus thereupon made a voyage to Egypt before returning to Rome in the beginning of June 202, it would seem that it preceded his stay in Palestine, which would then be in 201, or even the end of 200. Cf. G. Goyau, *Chronologie de l'Empire romain*, Paris, 1891, p. 249, n. 10.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Bk. IV.

<sup>9</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, v.

hour of her death had arrived, a witness, who seems to have been none other than Tertullian, completed the moving story, added a prologue and inserted the several parts into the framework of a moral and religious exhortation.<sup>10</sup> It is hardly surprising that in these circumstances the *Passion* of Perpetua has a certain savour of Montanism; but on the other hand there is absolutely no real indication, notwithstanding what some have said of the visions Perpetua had in her prison, that she or her companions shared the particular beliefs of the narrator of their sufferings. They certainly appear as "spiritual" Christians with a very deep interior life, but they retain even in the exaltation of martyrdom a sense of moderation, a human touch, and an air of Roman dignity which are very striking. The modest demeanour of Perpetua, who pulled together her clothing, torn by the angry cow to which she had been exposed, and who fixed once more on her head the clasp holding her hair in position, is well known, as is also the maternal grace with which, perceiving that Felicitas was lying on the ground badly injured, she stretched out her hand and raised her up from the ground. The populace was affected by this at the time, and cried out that these two women should go out from the arena alive. But a moment later they recalled them, and demanded that they should be put to death.

At that time popular passions were unleashed against the Christians. Riots led to the violation of even their cemeteries, and attempts were made to close these: "Arcae non sint: no more cemeteries for the Christians" was the cry.<sup>11</sup>

There was an uneasy lull during the proconsulates of Julius Asper and Pudens. Then the persecution broke out in a more terrible form, under Scapula (211-213), affecting not only the proconsular province, but also Numidia and Mauretania. Tertullian endeavoured to arrest it by his letter to Scapula, which was "a combination of reasoning, petition, and threats."<sup>12</sup> For, he said, if the persecution were to continue, "what will you do with the

<sup>10</sup> Text in Migne, *P.L.*, Vol. III, 13-58; Armitage Robinson, *Texts and Studies*, I, 2, Cambridge, 1891; Franchi de Cavalieri, *Römische Quartalschrift*, Supplement Heft 5, Rome, 1896; Knoff, *Ausgewählte Martyrerakten*, 2nd edn., p. 42; J. van Beck, *Passio sanctarum Perpetuae et Felicitatis*, Nymegen, 1936.

<sup>11</sup> Tertullian, *Ad Scapulam*, iii.

<sup>12</sup> P. Monceaux, *Histoire littéraire de l'Afrique chrétienne*, Paris, 1901, Vol. I, p. 47.

thousands of men and women who will offer their limbs to your chains?" In point of fact, after a still more cruel outburst, the persecution died down before the end of the proconsulate of Scapula which coincided with a change of government.

The persecution had by that time reached other provinces besides northern Africa and Egypt. A Roman Christian named Natalis confessed the faith, without however suffering death.<sup>13</sup> There were martyrs in Cappadocia under the legate Claudius Herminianus, who showed himself particularly rigorous, though according to Tertullian at the end he was almost converted when suffering from a painful malady.<sup>14</sup> A bishop Alexander remained a long time in prison,<sup>15</sup> and it is possible that some Christians in Phrygia perished likewise at that time.<sup>16</sup>

On the other hand, the martyrdom of St. Irenæus, bishop of Lyons after St. Pothinus, which is placed in the reign of Septimius Severus, is not at all certain. The mention of the name of Irenæus in the *Hieronymian Martyrology* is not sufficient to prove its reality: it includes the names of other bishops of Lyons who certainly did not die as martyrs. St. Jerome, it is true, calls Irenæus a martyr incidentally in his *Commentary on Isaias*, but he says nothing about him in the *De viris illustribus*, in which he gives a brief life of the saint. Lastly, the silence both of Tertullian, who nevertheless speaks of Irenæus in his works, and of Eusebius, is not favourable to the tradition of the martyrdom of the second bishop of Lyons.

The date and circumstances of the martyrdom of St. Andeolus, who died for the faith near Viviers, in presence of Septimius Severus himself, would appear to be more certain if they were guaranteed by a document more authoritative than the martyrologies of Adon and Usuard.

It is equally possible that various martyrs honoured in towns in the Lyons region, Chalon, Tournus, and Autun, such as SS. Alexander, Epipodius, Marcellus, Valentinus and Symphorian, may have been victims of the Severian persecution, but nothing definite can be said about them.

<sup>13</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, V, xxviii, 8. The incident probably belongs to this persecution, but the date is not given by Eusebius.

<sup>14</sup> Tertullian, *Ad Scapulam*, iii.

<sup>15</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xii, 5.

<sup>16</sup> Martyrdoms of Gaius and Alexander (Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, V. xvi, 22); the date is not certain.

## § 2. THE SUCCESSORS OF SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS

*Caracalla*

The reign of Antoninus Caracalla, which began shortly afterwards, marked a return to the policy of appeasement. Of examples of severity towards Christians there are hardly any to mention other than the doubtful martyrdom of a bishop Alexander in Tuscany;<sup>1</sup> some acts of hostility in Osrhoene, which had then become a Roman province and whose Christian inhabitants, including the famous Bardesanes,<sup>2</sup> may have been disturbed both as Christians and as partisans of the dispossessed king;<sup>3</sup> and lastly the continuation of the troubles in the province of Africa under the cruel proconsul Scapula. The legate of Numidia and the procurator of Mauretania contented themselves with employing the sword when Christians were denounced to them. Scapula, open to all denunciations, multiplied the victims and sent them to the wild beasts.<sup>4</sup> But whether or not Tertullian's letter made an impression on him, he in turn became less fierce in the course of time. Doubtless also the denunciations became rarer, and the province was able to breathe again. It was destined to enjoy thirty-seven years of peace until the end of 249, interrupted only by a brief outbreak under Maximin.

*Elagabalus*

The short reign of Elagabalus, who was completely indifferent to the old Roman tradition, did not bring any fresh menace to the Church. He was imperial champion of solar monotheism in the form of the worship of his own god, the Baal of Emesa, and could not be zealous for the defence of the old religion of Rome. Aelius Lampridius, his biographer in the *Augustan History*, even asserts

<sup>1</sup> The *Passio Sancti Alexandri* (*Acta Sanctorum, Septembris*, Vol. VI, pp. 230-235) says that this bishop was taken to Caracalla, who was then decorating the imperial villa at Baccano, twenty miles from Rome on the Via Claudia. No episcopal see is known as existing then in that region, but this bishop may have been a member of the Roman "council," governing under the authority of the Bishop of Rome some portion of the territory belonging to the Roman see. On the other hand, the discovery of the remains of an imperial villa at Baccano has led to the identification of Caracalla with the Antoninus named in these Acts of St. Alexander, and has thus increased the credibility of the narrative.

<sup>2</sup> On Bardesanes, cf. *supra*, p. 640, n. 74.

<sup>3</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, IV, xxx. Cf. *infra*, p. 768.

<sup>4</sup> Tertullian, *Ad Scapulam*.

that he entertained a desire to build on the Palatine hill a Helio-gabalum which would combine the symbols of all the religions, including those of the *christiana devotio*.<sup>5</sup> But an implicit part of his programme was that some day Christianity would have to allow itself to become assimilated, willingly or unwillingly, to the syncretistic religion which Elagabalus wished to prevail throughout the empire.<sup>6</sup> If he had lived longer, the persecution would doubtless have been resumed. But in 222 the young emperor was massacred in his palace by rebellious soldiers.

### *Alexander Severus*

His cousin, Alexander Severus, who was not yet fourteen years old, succeeded him. The boy's mother, Julia Mamaea, was interested in Christianity; she had had discussions with Origen,<sup>7</sup> and Hippolytus of Rome dedicated to her a work on the Resurrection. Alexander himself was in touch with the Christian layman, Sextus Julius Africanus, who built for him the library of the Pantheon,<sup>8</sup> and Eusebius goes so far as to say, doubtless with some exaggeration, that his household was for the most part composed of Christians.<sup>9</sup> During his reign, the syncretistic movement which endeavoured to unite all forms of religion continued. But it was a benevolent Syncretism, aiming at union by toleration and mutual comprehension on the part of the various cults, without any forced assimilations. Alexander had a fraternal group of images in his private chapel in which he performed his morning devotions, comprising those of certain deified emperors, and also Apollonius of Tyana, Alexander the Great, Orpheus, Abraham, and Jesus Christ.<sup>10</sup> His biographer even assures us that he thought of building a temple to Christ, and of including him officially among the gods.<sup>11</sup> He caused to be carved on the walls of his palace the Gospel maxim, in the form given by the *Didache*: "Do not to others what thou would'st not have done to thyself."<sup>12</sup>

<sup>5</sup> iii, 3.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Augustan History: Elagabalus*, iii.

<sup>7</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xxi, 3.

<sup>8</sup> Grenfell and Hunt, *Oxyrhynch. Papyr.*, Vol. III, 1903, no. 412.

<sup>9</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xxviii.

<sup>10</sup> *Augustan History: Severus Alexander*, iv, 29.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, iv, 43.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, iv, 51.

Lampridius also gives in the *Augustan History* a curious detail.<sup>13</sup> Wishing to submit to popular ratification the choice of governors he proposed to nominate, he invoked in support of his proposal the usage of Jews and Christians in the nomination of their priests.

There was no question of any persecution during this reign. It seems even that the previous legislation may have been tacitly regarded as abolished, for the author of the *Life of Alexander* in the *Augustan History* was able to say that he had allowed Christians to exist: "Christianos esse passus est."<sup>14</sup> We have here a first and very clear manifestation of the fluctuations in this period of the third century in which, in the interval between persecutions ordered by the authorities, the last-mentioned seem on several occasions to have accepted the existence of Christianity.

Circumstances were so favourable in the reign of Severus Alexander that, according to his biographer, whose narrative need not be doubted, when there was a dispute concerning ownership between the corporation of tavern keepers or *popinari*, and the Christian body (whose collective possession of the property is explained in the next volume), the prince allowed the claim of the Christians, which was tantamount not only to the recognition of their existence but also their right to appear in court and their capacity for ownership.<sup>15</sup>

### § 3. THE PERSECUTION UNDER MAXIMIN

#### *The Persecuting Edict of Maximin*

This happy situation was changed by the disappearance in March 235 of Alexander, assassinated by his soldiers in Germany. His successor was the instigator of the murder, Maximin the Thracian, a coarse man of barbarian origin, who set out to persecute the partisans of his predecessor, and consequently the Christians amongst others. These were the subject of a special edict, yet one which, according to Eusebius, affected directly only the clergy, and more particularly the heads of churches.<sup>1</sup> But we know through

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, iv, 45.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, iv, 22.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, iv, 49.

<sup>1</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xxviii; *Chron.*, Olymp., 254. Eusebius says that the edict affected τοὺς τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν ἄρχοντας μόνους. One might think that only bishops were referred to, but in fact all the higher clerics, including deacons, were affected.



Origen that religious edifices were burnt.<sup>2</sup> Two of his friends, Ambrose a deacon, converted from paganism *via* Gnosticism, and Protocetus a priest of Caesarea in Palestine, were arrested, and it was to them that Origen thereupon addressed his *Exhortation to the Martyrs*. Did he himself have to hide, as was said a long time afterwards? He seems not to have been threatened, at least seriously.<sup>3</sup> In any case, his two friends and himself remained unharmed at that time.

### *The Persecution in Rome*

Some of the highest personages in the Church were affected. The pope Pontian, together with the illustrious doctor Hippolytus who, for reasons of doctrine and discipline already explained<sup>4</sup> had seceded and become the head of a dissident community, were sent to the mines of Sardinia,<sup>5</sup> where the climate and, at least so far as Pontian is concerned, bad treatment very soon led to their death.<sup>6</sup> Martyrdom reconciled them, and Hippolytus, before dying, instructed his followers to return to the great Church, which inscribed his name among its saints.<sup>7</sup> Pontian, absent from Rome, resigned his office, and was replaced by Anteros, who in fact died before him, possibly as a martyr also.<sup>8</sup>

### *The Persecution in the East*

The bishops of the other great ecclesiastical sees, Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, Caesarea in Cappadocia, and Carthage, were doubtless able to elude those who searched for them, for we do not hear of any of them perishing. Nevertheless, in Cappadocia and in

<sup>2</sup> *In Matt.*, xxviii.

<sup>3</sup> Palladius (*Lausiac History*, 147) says that Origen hid himself. But Eusebius, whom we may regard as better informed, seems certainly to suggest (*Hist. eccles.*, VI, xxviii) that Origen was not affected by this persecution; the *Discourse* of one of his most famous disciples, Gregory of Neocaesarea, pronounced in 238, leads to the same conclusion: the author says he has just been following the lectures of Origen for five years, without suggesting any interruption of this teaching.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *supra*, pp. 735 *et seq.*

<sup>5</sup> *Liberian Catalogue*, in *Liber Pontificalis* (ed. Duchesne, Vol. I, p. 4).

<sup>6</sup> "Afflictus maceratus, fustibus defunctus est." So the *Liber Pontificalis* (ed. Duchesne, Vol. I, p. 145).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Bk. IV.

<sup>8</sup> *Liberian Catalogue*, in *Liber Pontificalis* (ed. Duchesne, Vol. I, p. 5).

Pontus the persecution was in fact more bitter than the terms of the edict required. The legate of Cappadocia, not content with condemning members of the clergy, proceeded without distinction against all the faithful. Some disastrous earthquakes aroused the fanaticism of the pagans in those parts: it is possible that numerous accusations followed against the Christians, and in virtue of the earlier legislation which had not been abrogated, the judicial authority may have been led to pronounce capital sentences independently of the application of the edict of Maximin.<sup>9</sup>

Nevertheless, in the Empire as a whole, bloody executions do not seem to have taken place in large numbers. The persecution moreover did not last very long. Maximin probably was one of the first to weary of it. Very soon, moreover, he was in his turn killed by his soldiers (238), and his successors, Pupienus Maximus and Balbinus, who reigned only a few months, followed by Gordian (238-243) and Philip the Arab (243-249), took no new hostile steps against the Christians.

#### § 4. THE EMPEROR PHILIP AND THE CHURCH

##### *Was Philip a Christian?*

It has been asked whether Philip himself had not been a Christian. The way in which he arrived at power, by having his predecessor killed, would not favour the hypothesis, but Eusebius mentions,<sup>1</sup> without confirmation, a tradition according to which the bishop of Antioch imposed a penance on the emperor before allowing him to enter his church on Easter day; St. John Chrysostom even added the detail that this bishop was St. Babylas.<sup>2</sup> But surely an event like that would have made such a stir that a more definite memory would have persisted about it. Eusebius knew of some letters from Origen to the emperor and his wife, Otacilia Severa,<sup>3</sup> which might have thrown some light on the problem; his own attitude can therefore only lead to hesitation. On the other hand, the correspondence with Origen is at least an indication of Christian sentiments or leanings towards Christianity in the imperial

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Firmilian of Caesarea, *Epist.*, *apud* Cyprian, *Epist.*, lxxv, 10.

<sup>1</sup> *Hist. eccles.*; VI, xxxiv.

<sup>2</sup> *De s. Babyla contra Judianum et gentiles.*

<sup>3</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xxxvi, 3.

pair. But it is possible that it was these same dispositions that led later to the idea that Philip was a Christian. We must add that the bishop Dionysius also alludes to the Christianity of Philip,<sup>4</sup> and the fact that he was born in Hauran, a district which comprised in the third century many faithful, would make this not unlikely.

But if Philip really adhered to the Christian faith and deserved the title given him by St. Jerome of "the first Christian emperor"<sup>5</sup> it must be confessed that his religious belief remained very secret, and had no influence on his public life. Philip even presided at the secular Games, as a prince who retained for the ancient religion of Rome the same respect as his predecessors.<sup>6</sup> In fine, we may well believe that he did not profess towards Christianity more than a sympathy analogous to that of Alexander Severus.<sup>7</sup>

But the Church enjoyed during his reign an almost complete peace; he even allowed—for it could not have been done without official authorisation—the bishop of Rome, Fabian, successor to Anteros, to bring back from Sardinia the body of his predecessor, St. Pontian.<sup>8</sup>

### *Popular Agitation against the Christians*

One event, however, which occurred in the last months of Philip's reign, shows that hostility was constantly smouldering amongst certain elements of the population in regard to the Christians, and might burst out suddenly. At Alexandria, which shared with Rome the position of being the greatest city in the Empire, with a population of the most mixed character and one of the easiest to arouse, there was a rising in 249 against the Christians, resulting from the incitements of a "wicked diviner, and evil poet," as we are told in the letter of Bishop Dionysius of Alexandria to his colleague of Antioch, quoted by Eusebius.<sup>9</sup> Some of the faithful were seized, beaten and stoned; the virgin Apollonia had her jaws

<sup>4</sup> In Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xxxiv.

<sup>5</sup> *De viris illustribus*, liv: "qui primus de regibus romanis christianus fuit."

<sup>6</sup> Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus*, xxviii; Eutrope, *Breviarium*, ix, 3; Eusebius, *Chronicle*, Olymp. 257. On this celebration, cf. J. Gage, *Recherches sur les Jeux séculaires*, III, 3; *Le millénaire de Rome sous Philippe*, in *Révue des Etudes latines*, Vol. XI, 1933, pp. 412 et seq.

<sup>7</sup> For a definite attitude against the Christian character of Philip, see K. J. Neumann, *Der Römische Staat und die allgemeine Kirche bis auf Diokletian*, Vol. I (Leipzig, 1890), pp. 245-250.

<sup>8</sup> *Liber Pontificalis*, Pontianus (ed. Duchesne, Vol. I, p. 145).

<sup>9</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xli.

broken and was then burnt alive; Serapion had his limbs broken and was thrown down from the top of his dwelling; innumerable houses were pillaged. The account in Eusebius adds that the sedition ended in a civil war, but we do not know whether this means that the opponents of the Christians ended by fighting amongst themselves, or that there was some intervention on the part of authority.

This sudden attack upon the Christians, though doubtless a tragical one, remained an isolated fact at that time, but it shows the violence of popular passions which were still capable of being aroused against them. Doubtless the success of the unwearying propaganda of Christians serves to explain in part these intermittent outbursts, for the third century undoubtedly constituted a period of great progress for the Church.

# THE EXPANSION OF CHRISTIANITY FROM THE END OF THE SECOND TO THE BEGINNING OF THE FOURTH CENTURY<sup>1</sup>

## § I. PALESTINE, PHOENICIA, ARABIA AND EGYPT

### *Palestine and Phoenicia*

ALTHOUGH Palestine was the cradle of Christianity, it was not the land in which it spread most rapidly.

The work of preaching there probably met with serious obstacles and strong resistance on the part of the Jews. The Judæo-Christians, with their narrow outlook, were not very capable of spreading Christianity.<sup>2</sup> It was in the great Greek or hellenised cities of the

<sup>1</sup> Bibliography.—Same as for chapters vii and xii. Add: Z. Garcia Villada, *Historia ecclesiastica de España*, Vol. I: *El cristianismo durante la dominacion romana*, Madrid, 1929, 2 vols., mentioned in the notes to the first of these chapters. The most important work remains that of Harnack, *Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten*, 2 vols., 4th edn., Leipzig, 1924. Particular works, and sources relative to the period here studied, are indicated in the notes to the present chapter.

Concerning the penetration of Christianity in countries outside the Empire from the end of the second to the beginning of the fourth centuries, see: J. Tixeront, *Les origines de l'Eglise d'Edesse*, Paris, 1888; Rubens Duval, *Histoire politique, religieuse et littéraire de l'Eglise d'Edesse jusqu'à la première croisade*, Paris, 1892; J. Labourt, *Le christianisme dans l'Empire perse sous la dynastie sassanide*, Paris, 1904; F. Tournebize, *Histoire politique et religieuse de l'Arménie*, Paris, 1920; J. Marquart, *Die Entstehung der arminischen Bistümer*, in *Orientalia christiana*, Vol. XXVII (September 1932), pp. 1 et seq.; L. Duchesne, *Autonomies ecclésiastiques: Eglises séparées*, Paris, 2nd edn., 1905; J. Zeiller, *Les origines chrétiennes dans les provinces danubiennes de l'Empire romain*, Paris, 1918 (deals in the third part with the evangelisation of the Goths).

The progress of Christian evangelisation during the first three centuries is shown in the maps in the Atlas of K. Heussi and K. Mulert, *Atlas zur Kirchengeschichte*, 2nd edn., Tübingen, 1919, and of K. Pieper, *Atlas orbis antiqui christiani* (*Atlas zur alten Missions- und Kirchengeschichte*), Düsseldorf, 1931.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Bk. II, pp. 499-503.

coast of southern Syria, Caesarea, Ptolemais, Tyre and Beirut, that Christianity seemed to make most progress, and its recruits were comparatively few and scattered in the centres further south from Jaffa to Gaza. Even the Christian communities of the former group of cities appear in history only at the end of the second century. A Council was held in Palestine, as in many other provinces, in connection with the Easter controversy about 190,<sup>3</sup> comprising the bishops Theophilus of Caesarea, Narcissus of Aelia Capitolina (Jerusalem), Cassius of Tyre, Clarus of Ptolemais, and others whose names and sees are not mentioned by Eusebius, who refers to these other four prelates. Of these cities some such as Jerusalem and Caesarea belonged to Palestine, and others like Tyre and Ptolemais to Coelesyria; hence the ecclesiastical organisation was not as yet modelled on the administrative system, which was more artificial. Moreover, according to the synodal letter of the Phoenician and Palestinian bishops, this whole ecclesiastical region seems to have looked spontaneously towards the great Egyptian metropolis Alexandria rather than towards the Syrian metropolis Antioch. This tendency will continue.

### *Arabia*

It was doubtless from Palestine that Christianity spread beyond the Jordan to the far-off province of Arabia. This diffusion must have begun quite early, perhaps already in the second century, to judge by the results already manifest before the middle of the third. Origen visited this country at the beginning of the reign of Caracalla, i.e. about 214, called there—and this is worthy of note—by the imperial legate, who had asked for him both from the prefect of Egypt and the bishop of Alexandria, evidently in order to get information concerning Christian beliefs. We may infer from this that this magistrate had seen Christianity at work in his country, but that he preferred to glean his information from a well-known personality such as Origen rather than from the local Christians.<sup>4</sup> A little later we hear of a bishop at Bostra named Beryllus;<sup>5</sup> he was a theologian, and wrote books and letters somewhat tainted with Modalism. This led to discussions between him and his colleagues, in which Origen intervened and succeeded in bringing

<sup>3</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, V, xxiii-xxv.

<sup>4</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xix, 15.

<sup>5</sup> Eusebius, *ibid.*, VI, xx, 2, and xxxiii.

him back to more orthodox views. There were some Councils on this occasion, in the reign of Gordian, between 238 and 244, which shows that there was already a relatively numerous episcopate in the province of Arabia. Hence it is not at all surprising that the Emperor Philip and his wife Otacilia Severa, who emanated from that province, were in fact acquainted with Christianity and had been in communication with Origen.<sup>6</sup>

### *Egypt*

We have little information concerning the history of Christianity in Egypt at the end of the second century. But we know through Eusebius<sup>7</sup> that the persecution of Septimius Severus led to numerous martyrdoms not only at Alexandria but in the Thebaid, that is in southern Egypt. Fifty districts in Egypt, including Cyrenaica, possessed Christian communities before the Council of Nicaea, and more than forty were episcopal sees.<sup>8</sup> The Council of Alexandria in 320 or 321 numbered a hundred bishops.<sup>9</sup> Already in 250 at the time of the Decian persecution, certificates of sacrifices found in papyri<sup>10</sup> were distributed even in villages. True, these were given not only to Christians,<sup>11</sup> though one might think that those free from the slightest suspicion of Christianity would not always have had to submit themselves to a formality which in itself evidently did not affect them. In any case, later martyrological documents show that at the beginning of the fourth century there were numerous Christian villages.<sup>12</sup> Egypt has thus a right to be included amongst the countries of the Empire in which Christianity had won a notable part of the population in the course of the first three centuries. But the way in which it was propagated escapes us.

### *Cyrenaica*

The Pentapolis, in the West of Egypt, had provided the Church with some of its earliest believers. Not to mention the Cyrenean

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 761.

<sup>7</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VI, i-iii.

<sup>8</sup> A list of these, with an indication of the sources of information, is given in Harnack, *Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums*, IV, ch. 3, 3rd section, 7.

<sup>9</sup> Hefele, *Histoire des Conciles*, Vol. I, pp. 363-372.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. *infra*, pp. 791 *et seq.*

<sup>11</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *Acts of St. Peter of Alexandria*. Cf. St. Athanasius, *Apologia contra Arianos*, xxxv.

who helped Jesus to carry his cross,<sup>13</sup> several of his compatriots were witnesses of Pentecost,<sup>14</sup> and if some were included among those who opposed St. Stephen,<sup>15</sup> others were converted,<sup>16</sup> such as the Lucius who played a part in the founding of the Church at Antioch.<sup>17</sup> Hence it is not surprising that Christian propaganda was well received quite early in this country. In any case, in the second half of the third century each of the five cities, Cyrene, Ptolemais, Berenice, Arsinoe and Sozuse had apparently its own bishop, and this episcopate, like that of Egypt, recognised as head the Bishop of Alexandria.<sup>18</sup>

## § 2. NORTHERN SYRIA, ASIA MINOR, AND NEIGHBOURING REGIONS

### *Northern Syria*

Northern Syria, with its great metropolis of Antioch, was already strongly penetrated by Christianity in the second century. Its evangelisation continued to make progress certainly in the third century, at the end of which this province ranked among those in which the Christian religion had sufficient followers to vie in numbers with the other religions. A case like that of Paul of Samosata<sup>1</sup> shows that the Bishop of Antioch was a power in the city in the second half of the third century. On the other hand, we see from the signatures at the Council of Nicaea that there were no less than twenty-two bishops in Coesylria in the first quarter of the fourth century. Among them figure two *chorepiscopi* or "country bishops,"<sup>2</sup> and epigraphical testimonies confirm the existence of rural Christian communities in those parts.<sup>3</sup> We may even wonder whether, contrary to what happened in the West, the country districts were not sometimes won more speedily to the Faith, at least relatively, than some of the great cities in which the resistance of

<sup>13</sup> *Matt.* xxvii, 32; *Mark* xv, 21; *Luke* xxiii, 26.

<sup>14</sup> *Acts* ii, 10.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, vi, 9.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, xi, 20.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, xiii, 1.

<sup>18</sup> According to the letters of Dionysius of Alexandria (*Eusebius, Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxvi).

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Bk. IV.*

<sup>2</sup> On the *chorepiscopi*, cf. *Bk. IV.*

<sup>3</sup> Harnack, *Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums*, 2nd edn., p. 111.



the ancient cults was particularly strong. Thus, in spite of the importance of its Christian community, Antioch, as we see from the writings of Libanius, was still in the middle of the fourth century one of the centres of the pagan opposition.<sup>4</sup>

### Edessa

It was certainly from Syria that Christianity spread to the kingdom of Edessa or Osrhoene, where, as we have seen,<sup>5</sup> it had already made considerable progress before the end of the second century. These conversions were perhaps due mainly to Jewish Christians, whose activity seems to be reflected in the legend of Addai, the disciple of St. Thomas. But at the beginning of the third century, the young church of Osrhoene manifested its dependence on the Syrian church when the bishop Palout of Edessa received the imposition of hands from Serapion of Antioch.<sup>6</sup> This event was practically contemporary with the conversion of the king himself, Abgar IX, who reigned from 179 to 214,<sup>7</sup> after which this State was reunited to the Empire. The conversion of the king naturally had greatly influenced the progress of Christianity in the lands of the Euphrates. Already in the time of the Easter controversy (about 190), there were several bishops in Osrhoene.<sup>8</sup> At Edessa, the Christian church was a prominent edifice; when a flood destroyed it in 201 this fact was mentioned in the account of the catastrophe conserved<sup>9</sup> in a local chronicle.<sup>10</sup> From the time of Abgar, the Chris-

<sup>4</sup> See also St. John Chrysostom, *De sanctis martyribus*, Sermo i, and *Ad populum Antiochenum homilia*, xviii, 1, 2. Cf. J. Zeiller, *Paganus*, Paris-Fribourg, 1917, p. 66, and H. Gregoire, *La "conversion" de Constantin*, in *Revue de l'Université de Bruxelles*, 1930, pp. 231 et seq.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Bk. II, pp. 369-370.

<sup>6</sup> W. Cureton, *Ancient Syriac Documents relative to the establishment of Christianity*, London, 1864, p. 72.

<sup>7</sup> Eusebius, *Chron.*, ann. *Abrah.*, 2234-5; Sextus Julius Africanus, *Chron.*; M. J. Routh, *Reliquiae Sacrae*, Oxford, 1846, II, p. 307. Cf. Bardesanes, *Book of the Law of Countries* (W. Cureton, *Spicilegium syriacum*, London, 1899, p. 20); Langlois, *Collect. des Historiens de l'Arménie*, Vol. I, p. 92. J. Ortiz de Urbina, *Le origini del christianesimo in Edessa*, in *Gregorianum*, XV (1934), pp. 82-91, calls in question, but without much reason, the reality of the conversion of Abgar IX.

<sup>8</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, V, xxiii. The existence of several bishoprics does not follow from the text in a way that is absolutely certain, but in any case it is true of the Osrhoenian communities.

<sup>9</sup> Ed. Hallier, *Texte und Untersuchungen*, Vol. IX, 1, p. 86.

<sup>10</sup> L. Duchesne, *Histoire ancienne de l'Eglise*, Vol. I, p. 451.

tian Church of Edessa, with the poet and philosopher Bardesanes as one of its glories,<sup>11</sup> made great progress. Lastly, from the kingdom of Edessa Christianity must have spread into the western provinces of the Parthian kingdom, where we find it established from the third century,<sup>12</sup> and into Armenia, where it was completely established by the beginning of the fourth century at the latest.<sup>13</sup>

### *Roman Armenia*

But, at any rate in Roman Armenia, its propagation goes further back, for bishop Dionysius of Alexandria (middle of the third century) wrote to the Armenian Christian communities governed by the bishop Merusanes a letter on penance at the time of the Novatian schism.<sup>14</sup>

### *Asia Minor*

This propagation had probably originated in Asia Minor, which was of all the regions of the Roman Empire the one in which the Christian faith had made the most rapid progress. We have seen how successful it was in Bithynia at the commencement of the second century.<sup>15</sup> At the end of this same century, councils were held in Phrygia in consequence of troubles due to the Montanist heresy,<sup>16</sup> and Dionysius of Alexandria in the next century declared that this province possessed "the most populous churches."<sup>17</sup> The pagan rhetorician Lucius of Antioch makes the pseudo-prophet Alexandria of Abonoutica complain of the great number of atheists and Christians in Pontus<sup>18</sup> in the time of Marcus Aurelius, and about 190 the bishops of this country wrote to Pope Victor about the Easter question.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>11</sup> On Bardesanes, cf. *supra*, p. 640, n. 74.

<sup>12</sup> On the previous period, cf. Bk. I, pp. 368-370.

<sup>13</sup> On the evangelisation of Armenia, cf. *infra*, pp. 786-787.

<sup>14</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xlvi. Merusanes evidently had his see in Roman Armenia, and not in the kingdom of Armenia, for the letter sent to him by Dionysius was concerned with the failings of the Christians in the Decian persecution. Cf. L. Duchesne, *L'Arménie chrétienne dans l'Histoire ecclésiastique d'Eusèbe*, in *Mélanges Nicole*, Geneva, 1909, pp. 105-107.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Bk. II, pp. 363, 391.

<sup>16</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, V, xvi.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, VII, vii.

<sup>18</sup> *Alexander the pseudo-prophet*, by Lucian, xxv.

<sup>19</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, V, xxiii.

On the other hand, the inner Pontus was methodically evangelised only in the third century. Phedimus, the first known bishop of Amasia, the most important city in the part called Galatic Pontus, lived in the first half of this century. He gave to a disciple of Origen named Theodore, also called Gregory, and his brother Athenodorus, another spiritual son of Origen's, the task of preaching the faith in the country of Neocaesarea, situated much more to the east in Polemoniac Pontus. Gregory, whose persuasive preaching and miracles won for him the names of "Great" and of "Thaumaturgus," preached in town and country with great success. Comana, one of the towns, together with Amasia and Neocaesarea, in the mountainous region of Pontus, asked him for a bishop: he consecrated the first pastor of this new diocese, by name Alexander.<sup>20</sup>

Cappadocia, in the central part of Asia Minor, also had its Christian communities from the second century. The famous Thundering Legion, in which a fairly large number of Christian soldiers had very probably served from the time of Marcus Aurelius,<sup>21</sup> had for a long time had its quarters there, and by reason of local recruiting, drew its men largely from the region of Melitene, towards the eastern end of this province. Nevertheless the metropolis itself, Caesarea, begins to figure in Christian history only about the year 200, when its bishop Alexander, trained in the Catechetical School of Alexandria by Pantaenus and Clement, was thrown in prison on the occasion of the persecution of Septimius Severus.<sup>22</sup>

### § 3. THE HELLENIC PENINSULA AND ILLYRICUM

#### *The Hellenic Peninsula*

We lack information concerning the growth of the Church in Greece, Macedonia and Thrace during the third century. These parts were evangelised and already possessed organised Christian communities in the Apostolic period, and doubtless the progress

<sup>20</sup> A biography of St. Gregory Thaumaturgus is given by Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xxx; VII, xiv. We have also a panegyric on him by St. Gregory of Nyssa, representing the Pontic tradition concerning Gregory Thaumaturgus in the next century. His own works likewise give information concerning his life. On this, cf. Bk. IV.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Bk. II, pp. 402-403.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 758.

known to have taken place in the second century continued during the following one. But at the beginning of the fourth century we find that bishops of the Asiatic provinces were in an overwhelming majority at the Council of Nicea, while there were less than a dozen bishops from Thrace, Macedonia and Greece. Doubtless the sees of Philippi, Debelum, Anchialo, Nicopolis in Epirus, Thessalonica, Berea, Larissa, Athens, Corinth, Cenchre, Lacedaemon, and Byzantium also go back, some to the first and others to the second century.<sup>1</sup> The only new names we find at Nicea are those of Stobi in Macedonia, Euboea and Thebes in Greece, and Hephaestia in Lemnos, and we are led to infer that little more than four new sees had been established in the third century. But that is practically all we are able to say concerning the ecclesiastical development of the hellenic peninsula during the period between Septimius Severus and Diocletian.

### *Illyricum*

Doubtless we must place in this same period the founding of the first churches in Danubian Illyricum and Dalmatia, for we know of none there before. These lands may have been reached earlier by Christian preaching,<sup>2</sup> but concrete results in the form of constituted churches do not appear there before the second half of the third century. True, we then find these churches fairly numerous, and provided with a sufficiently complete hierarchy to lead us to think they had not just been founded. One of them, that of Pettau in Noricum, had at its head at the time of the Diocletian persecution an exegete of some fame destined to be martyred, Victorinus,<sup>3</sup> whose works were apparently not addressed to converts just out of their catechumenate.<sup>4</sup> A bishop of Salona, the metropolis of Dalmatia, Venantius, was perhaps martyred in a local persecution in the days of Aurelian.<sup>5</sup> But everywhere else the first authentic witnesses for Christianity were victims of the persecution under Diocletian (304 and following years), and these give no light as to any earlier

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Bk. II, pp. 364-365.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Bk. II, p. 361.

<sup>3</sup> St. Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, lxxiv.

<sup>4</sup> The Commentary of Victorinus on the *Apocalypse* has been published by J. Haussleiter in the Vienna *Corpus*, Vol. XLIX, in 1916. Other fragments by Victorinus in Migne, P.L., Vol. V. 281-316.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. J. Zeiller, *Les origines chrétiennes dans les provinces danubiennes de l'Empire romain*, pp. 49 et seq.

Christian past in the Illyrian region. They belonged to practically all the provinces of Illyricum, and at the same time came from very varying states of life: in Lower Moesia we have the soldiers Julius, Hesychius, Nicander, Marcion, Pasocrates and Valentian, and perhaps Dasius of Durostorum;<sup>6</sup> in Riparian Dacia, the exorcist Hermes; in Eastern Pannonia, the bishop Irenæus, the deacon Demetrius, the hermit gardener Sinerotas, a woman named Anastasia, and some consecrated virgins whose names are unknown, at Sirmium; in Western Pannonia, the bishop Quirinus of Siscia; in Noricum, Victorinus of Pettau and Florianus of Lauriacum, some time head of the Chancery of the governor of the province; in Rhoetia, the penitent Afra at Augusta Vindelicorum (Augsburg); in Dalmatia, the bishop Domnius at Salona, and in the same town the priest Asterius, the deacon Septimius, Anastasius the fuller, and also Felix, Victorinus, Antiochianus, Paulinianus, Gaianus and Telius, whose status is not known.<sup>7</sup>

#### § 4. GAUL

##### *Progress of Evangelisation Towards the End of the Second Century*

In Gaul, the third century saw an important step forward in the expansion of Christianity. To the churches in the Rhone basin were added others in regions further removed from the Mediterranean starting point.

After the persecution of 177, one of the most highly esteemed priests of the community of Lyons, Irenæus, who like Bishop Pothinus was originally from Asia Minor and a disciple of Polycarp of Smyrna, fortunately escaped death, and succeeded to the aged martyr.

<sup>6</sup> The *Passion* of Dasius of Durostorum (published by F. Cumont in *Analecta Bollandiana*, Vol. XVI, 1897, pp. 5 *et seq.*), put to death for refusing to play the part of a king of the Saturnalia because he was a Christian, and because this act would, as he said, involve immolation, certainly seems to be only a pious romance. But the existence of a martyr named Dasius is beyond doubt. Cf. J. Zeiller, *op. cit.*, pp. 110 *et seq.*

<sup>7</sup> Cf. J. Zeiller, *op. cit.*, pp. 53-128, for particulars of the various *Passions*. Père Delehaye, *Nouvelles fouilles de Salona*, in *Analecta Bollandiana*, Vol. XLVII, 1929, pp. 77 *et seq.*, has shown that the attribution of the title "soldiers" to Antiochanus, Gaianus, Paulinianus and Telius, arose from a wrong interpretation of the *Hieronymian Martyrology* (in which *milites*, soldiers, has more than once been confused with *miliaria*, milestones).

We know<sup>1</sup> that Irenæus governed the church of Lyons until the reign of Septimius Severus. But he was not a man to be satisfied with allowing it to remain just as it was when he was placed over it, and it may well be that, as a result of a new movement of Gallic evangelisation started by him, there arose a certain number of new Christian communities at increasing distances from Lyons, and in particular at Tournus, Chalon and Autun, if these were not already in existence before his episcopate. At Autun has been discovered the inscription of Pectorius,<sup>2</sup> one of the jewels of Christian epigraphy and one of the most significant testimonies to Eucharistic belief; part of it at least—for two portions can be distinguished—goes back to the end of the second or the beginning of the third century. Christianity at Autun must thus have had a very early beginning. Dijon, Langres, Besançon, and even the Rhine country were perhaps reached in this period. Does not Irenæus, moreover, speak of "Germans who have heard the word of Christ"?<sup>3</sup> It would seem that this can only mean inhabitants of provinces formed in the original Gallic territory and bearing the name of Germany.

The first three towns mentioned, Tournus, Chalon and Autun, had martyrs whose names have been already mentioned,<sup>4</sup> Alexander Epipodes, Marcellus, Valentine, and Symphorian,<sup>5</sup> who may have been contemporaries of Irenæus. But it is equally possible that they may have been later than his time, or on the other hand, as the Church of Lyons had already extended in the episcopate of Pothinus, they may have been put to death at a date fairly close to that of the martyrs of Lyons.

The Letter of the Church of Lyons, however, is silent as to martyrs who perished elsewhere, and this tells against the second

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 756.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. J. B. Pitra, *Spicilegium Solesmense*, Vol. I, Paris, 1852, pp. 554 *et seq.*; *Corpus inscriptionum graecarum*, IV, 582. An abundant bibliography on this inscription is given in the *Dictionnaire d'Archéologie chrétienne*, article *Autun*, Vol. I, colls. 3194-3198, and in the *Handbuch der altchristlichen Epigraphik* of C. M. Kauffmann, pp. 178-180.

<sup>3</sup> *Adversus haereses*, I, x, 2.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 756.

<sup>5</sup> The *Passion* of St. Symphorian, however, puts the martyrdom in the reign of Aurelian. Although there was not, as we shall see, an organised persecution in that reign, there may have been local outbreaks of persecution, the tradition of which was conserved in Gaul, for several Gallic martyrdoms are ascribed to the time of Aurelian in the *Passions*; but it must be admitted that these martyrological compositions deserve little credence. Cf. G. Bardy, *Les martyrs bourguignons de la persécution d'Aurélien*, in *Annales de Bourgogne*, VIII (1936), pp. 321-348.

hypothesis. But various *Passions*, unfortunately already of a somewhat late date and legendary in appearance, mention some of these martyrs in connection with Irenæus.<sup>6</sup> These may retain some trace of real events. It is in any case worthy of note that they do not represent any martyr as an organiser of these Christian communities, or as a bishop. Thus they might reflect in some measure the situation which may have existed still in the time of St. Irenæus and even continued for a part of the third century: if there were already several Christian communities in Gaul, only one bishop—apart from those in the region of Narbonne—would seem to have governed all these, namely the bishop of Lyons.

### *Lyons the Sole Bishopric in Gaul until the Third Century*

Such is at least the thesis defended by Mgr. Duchesne,<sup>7</sup> and solid arguments are not lacking in favour of it. Until the middle of the third century, no other episcopal see is mentioned in Gaul, apart from the Narbonne country and the Mediterranean coast. This state of things would resemble that which seems to have existed at the same time in Northern Italy, for from the second to the third century there are no traces of sees in that country other than those of Milan and Ravenna.<sup>8</sup> The scholarly bishop Theodore of Mopsuestia in Cilicia, in a treatise composed a little before his elevation to the episcopate (392-393),<sup>9</sup> says explicitly that in the church of the early days there was at first only one bishop in a province, and then some time later, two or three or more, and that this custom lingered on in the West. True, Harnack, in his work *Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten*<sup>10</sup> has replied that the witness of Theodore of Mopsuestia is too far removed from the facts to be decisive. But almost a century earlier, Eusebius, when enumerating in his *Ecclesiastical History*<sup>11</sup> the episcopal letters written about the year 196 concerning the Easter question, mentions one emanating from "the various Christian communities of Gaul of which Irenæus was

<sup>6</sup> Duchesne, *Fastes épiscopaux de l'ancienne Gaule*, Vol. I, pp. 45-56.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 45-56.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *supra*, Bk. II, pp. 495-496.

<sup>9</sup> Theodore of Mopsuestia, *In epistulas sancti Pauli commentarius*, ed. Swete, London, 1882. Vol. II, p. 124.

<sup>10</sup> 2nd edn., pp. 373-395.

<sup>11</sup> V, xxiii, 3.

the bishop.”<sup>12</sup> It may also be objected against Duchesne’s thesis that in the early Church the bishop alone consecrated the Eucharist, and that liturgical life was, so to speak, impossible without him: what then would have been the life of the various gallic Christian communities in existence besides that of Lyons, if they had no real pastor other than the bishop of that city? Must we say that already other liturgical practices arose out of these very circumstances, without leaving any immediate trace in the texts? An argument in this sense might be supported by the situation of the Church of Egypt, where until the third century there was only one bishop, that of Alexandria, though already many Christian communities were in existence there.<sup>13</sup> There remains also the silence of the texts as to gallic sees other than those of the Narbonne district and Lyons before the middle of the third century, and the analogy between the situation thus presented by Gaul with other provinces such as those of Upper Italy. Lastly, we must add that the episcopal lists of Gaul, with the exception of those of Lyons and the Narbonne, do not take us back earlier than the year 250 in the most favourable cases,<sup>14</sup> and a gallo-roman writer like Sulpicius Severus himself comments on the late evangelisation of his country, “*serius trans Alpes Dei religione suscepta*.”<sup>15</sup> Once again, this does not apply to the whole of Gaul, for the evangelisation of the Provençal coasts may have begun towards the end of the apostolic age, and the church of Lyons was doubtless constituted about 150. Outside these privileged zones, Christianity took some time to spread.

### *New Episcopal Sees in the Third Century*

Perhaps, for the very reason that towards the middle of the third century the evangelisation of Gaul seemed to have made little progress, a wider and more methodical missionary effort was

<sup>12</sup> The Greek word we have translated above as “communities” is *παροικία*. Harnack (*loc. cit.*) thinks that this means a “diocese.” But the term did not take this meaning till the fourth century. Cf. P. de Labriolle, *Paroecia*, in *Archivum latinitatis medii aevi*, Bulletin Du Cange, 1927, pp. 195-205, and *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XVIII, 1928, pp. 60 *et seq.* K. Müller (*Kleine Beiträge zur Altengeschichte*, 18; *Parochie und Diözese im Abendland*, in *Zeitsch. für die neutestamentlich. Wissenschaft*, XXXIII (1933), pp. 149-185) also supports Duchesne’s interpretation.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Bk. II, pp. 481-482.

<sup>14</sup> Duchesne, *Fastes épiscopaux de l’ancienne Gaule*, pp. 3-29.

<sup>15</sup> *Chronicon*, II, xxxii.



judged necessary. The episcopal historian of the sixth century, St. Gregory of Tours, relates in his *Historia Francorum* that, during the consulate of Decius and Gratus (250) seven bishops came from Rome and founded sees, Gatian the church of Tours, Trophimus the church of Arles, Paul that of Narbonne, Saturninus that of Toulouse, Dionysius that of Paris, Austremonius that of Clermont, and Martial that of Limoges. This group is certainly legendary, and its mystic number of seven warns us of this. At the very time which the Gregorian tradition assigns to Trophimus, Arles had a bishop, Marcian by name, mentioned in a letter of St. Cyprian, in which he appears as an adherent of the Novatian schism. But Marcian was not the first bishop of Arles: from the beginning of the fifth century tradition gave this title to St. Trophimus,<sup>16</sup> who, though not possessing the apostolic character which local ambitions attributed to him, belonged at the latest to the first half of the third century.<sup>17</sup> This case may be compared with that of the church of Vienne, which, when once separated from that of Lyons (if we accept their original union),<sup>18</sup> had successively at its head, before the Council of Arles in 314, four bishops, Crescens, Zacharius, Martinus (probably martyred in the persecution of Diocletian) and Verus; the first-named would thus be dated between 200 and 250.<sup>19</sup> On the other hand, if the *Passion* of St. Saturninus of Toulouse,<sup>20</sup> seeming to confirm the statement of Gregory, puts at 250 the beginning of the mission of this founder of the church of Toulouse, it is most likely that this is really the date of his martyrdom, and the conservation of so precise a memory of the year in which he began his apostolic labours is hardly likely. Thus, the sees of Arles and Toulouse would have earlier origins than those given them by Gregory of Tours. In view of the situation of Narbonne and the importance of this town, it would be natural to think that the see of Narbonne was at least as ancient as that of Toulouse. For the rest, the foundation of the see of Paris might well be put, in accordance with the episcopal lists, a little after the

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Bk. II, p. 362.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Bk. II, pp. 399-402.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Duchesne, *Fastes épiscopaux de l'ancienne Gaule*, Vol. I, 2nd edn., p. 204. It has been said already (Bk. II, p. 361) that Crescens, a disciple of St. Paul, may have evangelised Gaul, but that this would not make him the founder of the church of Vienne.

<sup>20</sup> Ruinart, *Acta martyrum sincera*, p. 110.

middle of the third century. The same applies to those of Rheims and Trèves, the four holders of which were present at the Council of Arles in 314.<sup>21</sup> This would be the best way of explaining a passage in St. Cyprian which has been interpreted differently in the controversy between Duchesne and Harnack. In letter lviii, Cyprian says that Faustinus, Bishop of Lyons, wrote to Pope Stephen about 258, in his own name and in those of "ceteri episcopi nostri in eadem provincia constituti." Duchesne thought that this might mean bishops of the Narbonne district as well as the rest of Gaul, which even at that date would have no other bishop than that of Lyons. But why would Lyons then be the leader in respect to the Narbonne country? It would all be simple if we could admit that from the middle of the third century Gaul, apart from the Narbonne country, had already some episcopal sees in addition to that of Lyons. At the same time, the sees of Limoges and Tours do not seem to be prior to the year 300, if we make use of the same basis of chronological computation. That of Clermont might be put in the last years of the third century, as the fourth holder of the see died in 384 or 385.<sup>22</sup>

The group indicated by Gregory of Tours is thus strongly controverted.<sup>23</sup> But the fact of a more marked progress in the evangelisation of Gaul in the third century is certain, and it is natural that Rome should be connected with it, as would seem to be confirmed by a passage in St. Fortunatus who, like Gregory of Tours, says that Saturninus went from Rome to Toulouse.<sup>24</sup>

In any case Christianity then reached several large cities in the Gallic provinces furthest removed from the Rhône basin, which alone had been reached in the second century: Paris, Rheims, and Trèves had churches about the year 250. The founder of the see

<sup>21</sup> Duchesne, *Fastes épiscopaux de l'ancienne Gaule*, 2nd edn., Vol. I, pp. 8-16.

<sup>22</sup> Duchesne, *Fastes épiscopaux de l'ancienne Gaule*, 2nd edn., Vol. I, p. 20.

<sup>23</sup> But this does not oblige us to reject as legendary the names of the traditional founders of the churches of Arles, Narbonne and Toulouse, not to mention others, as is done by G. de Manteyer, *Les origines chrétiennes de la Ile Narbonnaise, des Alpes-Maritimes et de la Viennoise*, Gap, 1924 (Extract from *Bulletin de la Société d'études des Hautes-Alpes*, 1923-1924). L. Levillain (*Saint Trophime, confesseur et métropolitain d'Arles, et la Mission des sept en Gaule*, in *Revue d'Histoire de l'Eglise de France*, Vol. XIII, 1927, pp. 145-189) has pointed out the quite arbitrary nature of this thesis.

<sup>24</sup> Fortunatus, II, viii. This Roman origin of St. Saturninus is not mentioned in the *Passion* of the saint.

of Rouen, Mallonus, previously bishop of Paris, flourished before the year 300; the sees of Sens,<sup>25</sup> Soissons and Châlons have a like antiquity,<sup>26</sup> and the same is true of Bourges<sup>27</sup> and Bordeaux<sup>28</sup> south of the Loire. Although the country districts must have remained refractory or hardly affected until the time of St. Martin, who undertook their apostolate at the end of the fourth century, the Christianisation of Gaul, which had already at the end of the second century, according to the testimony of Irenæus,<sup>29</sup> penetrated thoroughly a part of the population, was progressing well when in 311 the hostility of the Empire towards the Church came to an end.

## § 5. BRITAIN AND SPAIN

### *Britain*

Great Britain, which bounded the western domain of Rome, had at least some Christians about this time. The first Christian missions to this country were evidently later than those in Gaul. The story taken by Venerable Bede from the *Liber Pontificalis*, to the effect that a British king named Lucius had asked Pope Eleutherius for missionaries at the end of the second century and became a convert together with a number of his subjects, is obviously legendary. For at that time there was no king in Roman Britain,<sup>1</sup> and an independent British chieftain would not have been called by the Roman name of Lucius. True, Tertullian shortly afterwards includes Britain among the countries in which places

<sup>25</sup> The third holder of the see is mentioned in 475 (Sidonius Apollinaris, *Epist.*, VII, 5), and so the church easily goes back to the end of the third century.

<sup>26</sup> L. Duchesne, *Fastes épiscopaux de l'ancienne Gaule*, Vol. I, pp. 8-16.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 21-22.

<sup>28</sup> Irenæus says (*Adversus haereses*, I, Praefatio) that he had had to learn to speak the Celtic tongue, which implies a prolonged contact with indigenous elements.

<sup>29</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, I, iv.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Harnack, *Der Brief des britischen Königs Lucius an den Papst Eleutheros*, in *Sitzungsberichte der K. Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin*, 1904, pp. 909-916. Nevertheless, the request for missionaries by a native chieftain and his conversion together with his tribe would not be in itself at all strange, for we find in the fourth century Frigil, queen of the country of the Marcomans (the present Bohemia), acting in a very similar manner by writing to St. Ambrose (St. Paulinus, *Vita Ambrosii*, xxxvi) to ask to be instructed together with her subjects, and becoming a Christian with them shortly afterwards.

inaccessible to the Romans<sup>2</sup> have been subjected to Christ. But more worthy of acceptance, because less oratorical, is the assertion of Origen who less than half a century later also speaks of Britain as a country knowing the Christian religion.<sup>3</sup> In any case, at the end of the third century there existed several Christian communities, which had their martyrs in the persecution of Diocletian: St. Alban at Verulam, and two other victims at Caerleon (Legionum Urbs).<sup>4</sup> Lastly, the fact that some ten years later, three bishops, those of Londinium (London), Eboracum (York) and Colonia Lindiensium (Lincoln), were present at the Council of Arles (314) shows that the Church must have been fairly strongly organised in the British provinces before the end of the era of persecution.

<sup>2</sup> *Adversus Judaeos*, VII.

<sup>3</sup> *Homil. IV. in Ezechiel*, i.

[The above represents practically all that can be said for certain concerning the introduction of Christianity into Great Britain. The supposition that St. Paul visited this country is rightly described by Canon Bright (*Early English Church History*, Oxford, 1897) as a "pious fancy" (p. 1). As to the story of Pudens and Claudia, he says that this "would prove nothing, were it made good, as to a Church in Britain at that time." He adds: "In short, we may pass by all attempts at discovery of an apostolic foundation for the British Church: the theories which modern enthusiasm has created are as shadowy as the Greek fiction about Aristobulus, ordained by St. Paul as a bishop for Britain—or the Welsh story of Bran the Blessed, father of Caractacus, who brought to Britain the faith he had learned in Rome—or that beautiful mediæval romance which brought St. Joseph of Arimathea with twelve companions to Alavon or Glastonbury" (p. 3). As to the supposed mission sent by Pope Eleutherius to Lucius, Canon Bright remarks that this presents "no intrinsic improbability," and adds that "it is certain that not many years after the accession of Eleutherius—probably, indeed, between A.D. 196 and 201—Tertullian exultingly declares that places in Britain not yet reached by Romans were subject to Christ." He thinks Tertullian must have had some reason for making this statement, and concludes: "we cannot reasonably doubt that some Christians did cross the Channel to our shore during the second century, if not earlier, and planted here and there some settlements of the Church. It was 'almost certainly from Gaul'—certainly not, as far as we can judge, directly from the East—that these outposts, so to speak, of the advancing spiritual kingdom were sent forth among the Roman provincials of Britain." Later research has tended to confirm the judgment of this learned Anglican historian in every respect.—TR.]

<sup>4</sup> *Mart. Hieron.*, June 22nd, V. Ed. De Rossi-Duchesne, *Act. SS.*, Novembris, Vol. II, i, p. (lxxv), and ed. Quentin-Delehay, *Act. SS.*, Novembris, Vol. II, 2, p. 331; *Chronica Minora*, Vol. III, ed. Mommsen, *Monum. Germ., Auctores antiquissimi*, Vol. VII, p. 31; Gildas, *De excidio et conquestu Britanniae*, and Bede, *Hist. eccles.*, I, 7. It has been urged against the historical character of these martyrdoms that the persecution of Diocletian did not extend either to Britain or to Gaul, governed by Constantius Chlorus, who avoided the shedding of blood (cf. *infra*, Bk. IV). But the undeniable goodwill of Constantius towards Christians does not exclude some isolated executions, due to particular circumstances.

*Spain*

In Spain, we are still in obscurity until the middle of the third century. St. Irenæus<sup>5</sup> and Tertullian<sup>6</sup> already speak of the churches of this country. But we have to wait half a century longer for precise information. The correspondence of St. Cyprian,<sup>7</sup> bishop of Carthage, consulted, because of the great authority he enjoyed everywhere, about two Spanish bishops, Basilides of Legio (Leon) and Asturica Augusta (Astorga), and Martial of Emerita (Merida), who had lapsed in the persecution of Decius, implies an already developed ecclesiastical organisation of the Spanish provinces. For we find, besides the two guilty bishops, Bishop Felix of Caesar Augusta (Saragossa), and another, Sabinus, whose see is not specified, and also indications of a numerous episcopate which already met in councils. Three years later, the successor to Felix of Saragossa, Fructuosus, was martyred with his deacons in the persecution of Valerian, and half a century later still in the persecution of Diocletian, Christian blood flowed at Seville, Cordova, Calahorra, Complutum, Italica, Barcelona, and Gerona, and about the same time the first council on which we are fairly well informed in pre-Constantinian times met at Illiberis (Elvira), consisting of a bishop of Galicia, two from Tarragona, three from Lusitania, eight from Carthagina, and twenty-one from Batca. These facts show that the whole of Spain must have been evangelised, and christianised to a considerable extent, in the course of the third century. True, our information, as for other parts of the West, concerns only cities, and even in these the numerical importance of the Christian communities is unknown to us.

## § 6. AFRICA

*Christianity Solidly Planted in Africa at the End of the Second Century*

The martyrdom of about a dozen Christians of Scillium, executed at Carthage in 180, as we mentioned in a previous book,<sup>1</sup> shows the existence of a Christian community in a little town of the

<sup>5</sup> *Adv. haeres.*, I, iv, 2.

<sup>6</sup> *Adv. Jud.*, vii.

<sup>7</sup> St. Cyprian, *Epist.*, lxvii.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Bk. II, pp. 404-405.

Proconsular province in the time of the last of the Antonines. Christianity had therefore already obtained a solid footing in Roman Africa in the latter half of the second century. After the bloody events of the beginning of the reign of Commodus, the success of the evangelical preaching seems to have been facilitated by a period of calm which lasted nearly twenty-five years.

When the persecution burst out afresh about 200, Tertullian wrote of the "thousands of Christians who offered themselves to the blows of the persecutor."<sup>2</sup> He even goes so far as to imply, in the famous passage which says that Christians were already so numerous that their withdrawal would render the cities practically deserts,<sup>3</sup> that the majority of the inhabitants of the towns professed Christianity at that time. The rhetorical exaggeration is obvious, but it may not go so far as wholly to misrepresent something which was happening under his very eyes, something of which he spoke with knowledge, and which he could hardly describe falsely to his readers and compatriots. The extension of the repressive activity of the magistrates shows likewise that there were at that time faithful in all the parts of Northern Africa, Proconsular Africa, Numidia and Mauretania. *Passions* as reliable as the *Acts of Perpetua*<sup>4</sup> put us in presence of a very complete ecclesiastical hierarchy. We know also through Tertullian that the African Christian communities comprised members of the aristocracy as well as the more humble classes of the servile population.

### *Progress in the Third Century*

The period of lasting peace which in Africa continued down to the episcopate of St. Cyprian, who assumed the see of Carthage in 249 on the eve of the Decian persecution, was favourable to the Church, which profited by it and made further progress. A first Council of Carthage, held probably shortly after the year 200, gathered together under the presidency of Bishop Agrippinus, seventy bishops of Proconsular Africa and Numidia.<sup>5</sup> A second

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *supra*, pp. 753.

<sup>3</sup> *Apologeticus*, xxxvii.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *supra*, pp. 754-755.

<sup>5</sup> St. Cyprian, *Epist.*, lxxi, 4; lxxiii, 3. The date is questioned: cf. Hefele-Leclercq, *Histoire des Conciles*, Vol. I, pp. 154-155, and especially the notes. Dom Leclercq would prefer a date earlier than 200. But the preoccupation of the conciliar discussions with the question of heretical baptism, which became acute

council, in the time of the bishop Donatus, a contemporary of Pope Fabian, between 236 and 248, already numbered ninety bishops.<sup>6</sup> Another, convoked a few years later by St. Cyprian (autumn of 256), gathered together almost the same number from the Proconsular Province, Numidia and Mauretania.<sup>7</sup> It certainly seems that the number of bishops in relation to the Christian population increased much more rapidly in Africa than for instance in Gaul or Upper Italy. But the crowd of apostates under the Decian persecution,<sup>8</sup> and some ten years later the number of martyrs who vindicated the honour of the Christian name under the Emperor Valerian,<sup>9</sup> equally shows the remarkable growth of the African Church in the course of the third century.

### *Evangelisation Beyond the Roman Frontiers*

The evangelical message even seems to have gone outside the frontiers of the Empire towards the south of the African provinces at that time. Certainly these boundaries were somewhat undefined, and more than one Moorish tribe belonged nominally to Rome and yet was not effectively subject to her. To the west of Numidia, in the two provinces of Caesarian Mauretania (the modern departments of Algiers and Oran) and of Mauretania Tingitana (Morocco), the Roman occupation never extended beyond a comparatively thin zone, and the native tribes of Moors or Berbers, who were independent or semi-independent, and whose territories extended sometimes almost as far as the coast, occupied the country between the Roman towns and fortified posts. Through them one passed gradually from the Roman territory to the outside world of the Sahara. The preaching of Christianity must also have passed quite early from Roman Africa to Barbarian Africa, for Tertullian asserts<sup>10</sup> that various tribes of Berbers and several parts of the

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in the third century, and the silence of Tertullian as to African councils in his *De jejuniis*, which is later than 213, and in which he speaks of Eastern synods as a glory of those churches, seem to compel us to put the council about the year 220, as Duchesne has done (*Histoire ancienne de l'Eglise*, Vol. I, p. 422).

<sup>6</sup> St. Cyprian, *Epist.*, lv, 10. On the error in interpretation, which has led to the supposition that this council, in which a bishop of Lambessa was deposed, was held in the latter town and not at Carthage, cf. Hefele-Leclercq, *Histoire des Conciles*, Vol. I, p. 162, n. 2.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, lii. Cf. also Hefele-Leclercq, *op. cit.*, pp. 165 *et seq.*

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *infra*, p. 795.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *infra*, pp. 804-805.

<sup>10</sup> *Adversus Judaeos*, vii: "Getulorum varietates et Maurorum multi fines."

Mauretanian country already knew of the Gospel at the beginning of the third century. Among the innumerable bishoprics in Africa which are mentioned in the next century, several must have been situated in Moorish localities. But it would not be easy to describe these, especially as the political fluctuations and in particular the variations of the Roman frontier had, so far as we can infer from epigraphical or other remains, no consequences from the religious point of view. "The Moors became Christian at the same time as the Roman populations. . . . Evangelisation on this frontier has no history distinct from that of Africa in general. We know of no apostle of the Moors; we nowhere find a church or an ecclesiastical organisation peculiar to this race. Christianity infiltrated among them gradually as in the province itself; the sees were founded in the midst of groups of the population more or less removed towards the interior. But it was always the African Church."<sup>11</sup>

## § 7. ITALY

In Italy, Christianity must also have made progress during the periods of calm between the persecutions of the third century.

### *Upper Italy*

When the century opened, only three episcopal sees were established, so far as we know, between the Alps and Sicily: Rome, Milan and Ravenna. In the case of the two latter, it is only by a chronological approximation that we can put their beginnings before the end of the second century.<sup>1</sup> The third century almost doubles the number for Northern Italy alone. Aquileia, destined to become one day, like Milan and Ravenna, a great ecclesiastical metropolis, doubtless had its first bishop, called Hermagoras in the episcopal lists,<sup>2</sup> round about the year 250, for the fifth bishop, Theodore, signed the decrees of the Council of Arles in 314. The signatures of the Council of Sardica in 343 have the names of the

<sup>11</sup> Duchesne, *Autonomies ecclésiastiques, Eglises séparées*, 2nd edn., Paris, 1905, p. 286.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *supra*, Bk. II, pp. 495-496.

<sup>2</sup> Episcopal lists of Aquileia in De Rubeis, *Monumenta Ecclesiae Aquileiensis*, Strasburg (Argentina), 1740, app. 6; *Monumenta Germaniae historica, Scriptores*, Vol. XII, p. 367.



sixth bishop of Verona and the fifth of Brescia, and accordingly the creation of these two sees must also go back much farther than the year 300.

### *The Italian Peninsula*

In the Italian peninsula, the growth in the number of episcopal sees, probably greater in proportion to the Christian population than in northern Italy, was certainly very great during the first half of the third century, for in 251 there was held at Rome under Pope Cornelius a synod of sixty bishops.<sup>3</sup> As all the bishops summoned may not have attended the council, we can put the number a little higher for the territory of which Rome was the ecclesiastical centre. But we are not able to identify these sees. It is, however, probable that Ostia had its own bishop before the end of the era of persecutions: the account of Pope Marcellus (336-337) in the *Liber Pontificalis*, and St. Augustine<sup>4</sup> both mention the privilege of the bishop of Ostia of consecrating the Roman bishop as an old one. Other suburbican sees such as Porto, Albano and Tibur may have a like antiquity. The creation of these various sees does not necessarily indicate a new effort of evangelisation in a region where Christianity had penetrated in the time of the Apostles, but it may indicate an increase in the density of the Christian population in the immediate surroundings of Rome. We may suppose that the same applied, more or less, to the rest of Italy. It seems certain in any case that Naples had its first bishop, St. Aspren, at the beginning of the third century at the latest, for his eighth successor, Fortunatus, flourished at the time of the Council of Sardica in 343, and it also seems probable that the church of the religious metropolis of the Campagna, Capua, whose first known bishop, Proterius, was functioning in 313, had not just then been founded.<sup>5</sup>

As for the number of the faithful in a great church like that of Rome, the very valuable information given in the letter of Cornelius to Fabius of Antioch<sup>6</sup> mentioning "forty-six priests, seven deacons, seven subdeacons, forty-two acolytes, fifty-two exorcists, lectors and porters, and more than fifteen hundred widows and

<sup>3</sup> Mansi, I, 865-866.

<sup>4</sup> *Breviculus collationis cum donatistis*, iii, 29.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. F. Lanzoni, *Le origini delle diocesi antiche d'Italia*, 1st edn., pp. 128 et seq., and 143 et seq.

<sup>6</sup> In Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xliii, 11.

needy," enables us to put the whole number at some forty thousand souls towards the middle of the third century.

*The evangelisation of the country districts was still backward*

In Italy as elsewhere, at least in the West, and apart from exceptions, only the cities and their immediate surroundings were then affected by Christian preaching. The country districts, less accessible materially and morally—for the old superstitions died hard there—remained refractory or were not reached by it. In Gaul, for instance, an apostle of the countryside like St. Martin would find practically everything still to be done at the end of the fourth century. In the East it was not the same. The proportion of Christian inscriptions, the martyrological writings, the intensity of the sudden pagan reactions, and on the other hand the more normal participation by Christians in the life of cities between these explosions—these all combine to show that the East during the third century, as at the end of the second, was ahead of the West in the work of the Christianisation of the Roman world, though to an extent which varied according to the different regions.<sup>7</sup>

## § 8. THE PROPAGATION OF CHRISTIANITY OUTSIDE THE ROMAN EMPIRES

It was also, as geography would suggest, beyond the eastern frontiers that Christian propaganda began to obtain very definite results beyond the Empire, whereas nothing like that is known in the case of the West.

### *Persia*

For from the third century, if not, as is possible, already at the end of the second, the Gospel began to take a hold on Persia, where it had been little known previously.<sup>1</sup> A *Dialogue* of a disciple of Bardesanes of Edessa named Philip<sup>2</sup> implies that the Christian religion had penetrated as far as the eastern provinces of Persia<sup>3</sup> about the year 220, and this would mean that its evangelisation

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *supra*, pp. 764 *et seq.* and Bk. IV.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vol. II, pp. 368-370.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 644, n. 18.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica*, VI, x, 46.

must go back to the preceding century. Bishop Dionysius of Alexandria alludes in a letter in 250 to the Mesopotamian churches.<sup>4</sup> Some Christian prisoners were taken from Syria by King Sapor after his great victory over the Emperor Valerian (260). They were interned in Mesopotamia and Persia, and must have helped in the evangelisation of the land of their exile. This evangelisation was certainly already fairly advanced, for ten years later we find Persian Christians disputing with the Manichaeans. Lastly, in the last quarter of the third century, the capital of the great Eastern kingdom, Seleucia-Ctesiphon, was an episcopal see, occupied by a well-known bishop, the Aramean Papa bar-'Aggai, and the plan he conceived at the beginning of the fourth century of federating all the Persian Christians under the headship of the bishop of the royal cities shows that there were already several episcopal sees in the country. Again, we gather from the acts of the Synod of Dadiso, held in the following century, that Papa bar-'Aggai had himself had predecessors at Seleucia-Ctesiphon. Hence when the persecution of the Persian church began, it already had a long history behind it.<sup>5</sup>

The extent of the first persecution of Persian Christians by King Sapor II at the time of the death of Constantine (from 338) is a confirmation of the fact that the preaching of Christianity had resulted in gains among the population of his kingdom which could only have been obtained after a lapse of time.

### Georgia

Georgia must also have been evangelised in the end of the third century through the ports of the north-west coast of the Black Sea, for one of the ancient churches represented at the Council of Nicaea was that of Pityus,<sup>6</sup> at the foot of the Caucasus range.

### Armenia

The Christianisation of Armenia, most likely commenced at the beginning of the third century by Syrian missionaries from Edessa,

<sup>4</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VII, v.

<sup>5</sup> On all this, cf. J. Labourt, *Le christianisme dans l'Empire perse sous la dynastie sassanide*, pp. 1-43.

<sup>6</sup> H. Gelzer, *Patrum Nicaenorum nomina*, Leipzig, 1898, p. lxxii. On the beginnings of Christianity in Georgia, and perhaps amongst the Scythians in the third century, see P. Peeters, *Les débuts du christianisme en Georgie d'après les sources hagiographiques*, in *Analecta Bollandiana*, L (1932), pp. 5-58.

was the work of St. Gregory the Illuminator, son of the Parthian prince Anou or Anag, and said to have been born in 257. The conversion of the Armenian nation was already making good progress before the year 300, but its completion following the baptism of the King Tiridates and the royal family, probably between 290 and 310, and the organisation of the Armenian church belong to the ecclesiastical history of the fourth century.<sup>7</sup>

## India

It is possible that the Christian message was also carried before the year 300 to a still farther land of Asia. According to Eusebius,<sup>8</sup> the first master of the Catechical School of Alexandria, the Sicilian Pantaenus, was a missionary to "India" towards the end of the second century. It is said that he there found memories of a much earlier preaching by the apostle Bartholomew. We have seen above<sup>9</sup> that little store is to be set on these vague "apostolic traditions," which have insufficient support. The mission of Pantaenus is, on the other hand, quite credible; but we have no other evidence for it than the statements quoted by Eusebius, who gives them for what they may be worth.

As to the land itself which Pantaenus may have evangelised, the name "India" at that time might signify the present Yemen in Arabia, or the kingdom of Axoum on the Abyssinian coast, quite as well as India properly so called. A bishop of the fourth century, the Arian Theophilus, who preached Christianity with a measure of success amongst the Himyarites or Sabeans of southern Arabia

<sup>7</sup> The Life of St. Gregory the Illuminator, full of legendary elements, is given in the *Acta sanctorum*, Vol. VIII (September), pp. 295-413. On the dates of the life of Gregory, cf. Harnack, *Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums*, 2nd edn., Vol. II, p. 171, and Fr. Tournèize, *Histoire politique et religieuse de l'Arménie*, pp. 121 *et seq.* The conversion of the mass of the Armenians seems later than 300, but before the end of the persecution of Diocletian. Sozomen (*Hist. eccles.*, II, viii) has only vague references to it: "I have learnt that the Armenians had been christianised a long time before." This means before the reign of Constantine, but the text does not say whether the evangelisation had only begun or was completed a long time before Constantine.

<sup>8</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, V, x. St. Jerome (*Epist.*, lxx; *De viris illustribus*, xxxvi, 70) amplifies the succinct indications of Eusebius, and explains that Pantaenus had been sent to India by the bishop Demetrius of Alexandria, and that he preached to the Brahmins. But this seems quite conjectural.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Bk. I, p. 324.

was, according to Philostorgius,<sup>10</sup> "Indian" by origin, and there were already some Christians in his native land, the island of Dibous. Does this mean Diu, Socrotra (Dioscorida), or a little island off the shore of Ethiopia? It is difficult to say, and hence also to decide whether it was only the coasts of the Red Sea or the approaches to India, or India itself, that was penetrated by the Christian faith before the middle of the third century.<sup>11</sup> *The Acts of Thomas*,<sup>12</sup> which make the Apostle go to India itself, are too clearly apocryphal to deserve the least credit. But a newly discovered text and a very valuable one may perhaps provide a solid argument in favour of an evangelisation of India going back at least to the third century. This is one of the fragments of Mani discovered in Egypt,<sup>13</sup> in which the founder of Manichaeism speaks thus:<sup>14</sup> "At the end of the years of the king Ardaschir, I set forth to preach. I travelled in a vessel to the land of the Indians. I preached to them the hope of life, and I chose there a good following. In the year when King Ardaschir died and his son Schapur became king, I went in a vessel from the land of the Indians to the land of the Persians, and from the land of the Persians I came into the lands of Babylon, Maisan and Chuzistan. . . ."

That this refers to the beginning of India proper seems clear if we remember the close relations between Manichaeism and the Indian religion. That these declarations by Mani imply a previous evangelisation there seems equally likely, for Mani presents himself

<sup>10</sup> The rare fragments hitherto known (some others have just been discovered) of the *Ecclesiastical History* of the Arian Philostorgius are published in Migne, P.G., Vol. LXV, p. 481, and, more recently, in the *Berlin Corpus*, by J. Bidez (Leipzig, 1913). Philostorgius was a one-sided historian, and he may have exaggerated the missionary work of his co-religionist Theophilus, but he certainly did not invent it.

<sup>11</sup> The bishop Frumentius preached the Gospel in Abyssinia at the beginning of the fourth century (Rufinus, *Hist. eccles.*, I, ix), and Theophilus himself was sometimes called "Blemmaeus," the name of an African people, by his opponents, and hence the Abyssinian hypothesis would seem to be indicated. But the word *Δῖβου* is only the translation of a Hindu term *Dvipa*, meaning island, and it seems perhaps more natural to regard it as signifying a locality in the Indian Ocean rather than the Arabian Gulf.

<sup>12</sup> The apocryphal *Acts of Thomas* belong to the third century. Cf. Lipsius, *Die Apocryphen Apostelgeschichte und Apostellegenden*, Vol. I, Brunswick, 1883. Cf. Bk. IV.

<sup>13</sup> Bk. IV.

<sup>14</sup> At the beginning of the *Kephalaia* published by C. Schmidt, *Neue Originalquellen des Manichäismus*, Stuttgart, 1933.

in his preaching as an apostle of Jesus Christ, and he must have addressed Christians in the first place, and found amongst them his "good following," if that is really the meaning of the words thus translated. The Christian communities which Cosmas Indicopleustes found in Hindustan in the sixth century, and which were then connected with the church of Persia,<sup>15</sup> of which they were colonies, and possibly those he visited in the island of Dioscorides, would thus go back to a period previous to the end of the persecutions in the Roman Empire.

### *First Evangelisation of the Goths*

In Eastern Europe also, the first seeds of Christianity were sown among the floating populations beyond the frontier of the Empire from the middle of the third century. The most important of the Germanic peoples which occupied the parts to the north and north-east of the lower Danube was the Gothic race. The incursions of the Goths into Roman territory increased in number from the reign of Decius to that of Aurelian (250 to 270 roughly). It was doubtless then that they heard of Christianity for the first time. Commodian, who is thought to have written about that time, speaks in his *Carmen apologeticum*<sup>16</sup> of Christians who, having been taken away into captivity by the Goths after the defeat and death of Decius (251), won the sympathies of their conquerors. This sympathy must have prepared the way for conversions. The Catholic historian Sozomen<sup>17</sup> and the Arian Philostorgius<sup>18</sup> at the beginning of the fifth century agree in attributing the same effects to the invasion of Asia Minor by the Goths a short time afterwards, under Valerian. From Galatia and Cappadocia, the invaders then brought back some Christians, including clergy, who successfully taught them the religion of Christ. One of these apostolic prisoners, Eutyches the Cappadocian, is praised by St. Basil of Caesarea in one of his letters for doing this.<sup>19</sup> The celebrated Ulfila himself, often called the Apostle of the Goths because his labours brought the mass of

<sup>15</sup> Migne, P.G., Vol. LXXXVIII, p. 88.

<sup>16</sup> 810 *et seq.*

<sup>17</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, II, vi.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, II, v. Philostorgius here calls the Goths "Scythians," but this need not deceive us.

<sup>19</sup> *Ep.*, clix.

the Visigothic nation to Christianity in an Arian form in the fourth century, was a grandson of Cappadocian prisoners who in the preceding century had doubtless begun to labour for the conversion of their captors.<sup>20</sup> But the results of such efforts do not become visible to us until a hundred years later.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. J. Zeiller, *Les origines chrétiennes dans les provinces danubiennes de l'Empire romain*, p. 442.

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# THE GREAT PERSECUTIONS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE THIRD CENTURY, AND THE PERIOD OF RELIGIOUS PEACE FROM 260 TO 302<sup>1</sup>

## § I. THE DECIAN PERSECUTION

### *Renewal of Persecution in the Middle of the Third Century*

THE marked success of Christian propaganda was bound to alarm a power which had always regarded the Christian religion as an enemy, or at least as a danger. Septimius Severus had tried to put a stop to conversions to the Christian faith, but the persecution which then ensued died down comparatively quickly. That of Maximin had been bloody, but brief. Gordian III had left the Church in peace; Philip the Arabian had belonged to it, or had been sufficiently sympathetic towards it to be taken for one of its members. But with Decius, who succeeded Philip in 249, a representative of the old Roman tradition mounted the throne. One of his chief aims was the restoration of the old ways: it was practically inevitable that he would deal rigorously with Christians.

With him, the persecution became truly general for the first

<sup>1</sup> Bibliography.—Same as the general bibliography for Ch. xvii. The sources for the two great persecutions under Decius and Valerian are indicated in note 2 below and p. 801, n. 5.

Works dealing with these persecutions, and the history of the period of peace of the Church in the second half of the third century, and some sources for details are indicated in the notes to this chapter.

See also: P. Monceaux, *Histoire littéraire de l'Afrique chrétienne*, Vol. II: *Saint Cyprien et son temps*, Paris, 1902; Wickert, article *Licinius*, no. 173 (Valerian), and no. 84 (Gallienus) in Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopädie*, Vol. XIII, 1926, col. 488-495 and 350-369; L. Homo, *L'empereur Gallien et la crise de l'Empire romain au IIIe siècle*, in *Revue historique*, Vol. LXIII, 1913, pp. 1-22 and 225-267; *De Claudio Gothico, Romanorum imperatore*, Paris, 1903; and *Essai sur le règne de l'empereur Aurélien*, Paris, 1904 (fasc. 89 of the *Bibliothèque des Ecoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome*); P. Damerau, *Kaiser Claudius II Gothicus*, Leipzig, 1934; Groag, article *Domitius*, no. 36 (Aurelian) in Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopädie*, Vol. V, 1903, col. 1347-1419.



time, and aimed openly at the extermination of Christianity. A duel ensued between the Church and the Roman Empire.

### *The Edict of Decius*

The text of the persecuting edict has not come down to us, but its application enables us to determine its nature with sufficient exactness.<sup>2</sup> It compelled not only every Christian, but every person suspected of Christianity, and perhaps in principle all the inhabitants of the Empire,<sup>3</sup> to make an act of adhesion to pagan worship, such as participation in a sacred meal, libation or sacrifice even reduced to its simplest expression, such as offering a few grains of incense to the statue of the Emperor, indicating acknowledgment of the imperial divinity which summed up the official religion of Rome. Thereby the suspect would show that there was no real foundation for the suspicion which had been attached to him, and a Christian abjuring his faith would be straightway absolved, by virtue of the Trajan legislation, from the crime which ceased with his disavowal. As in the past, what was desired was less to punish the crime than to make it cease. But to arrive at this result all the means left to the discretion of the judges were lawful—torture, long imprisonment, attempts at seduction: all that was required was that they should succeed. Hence these words of Origen: "The judges are upset if torments are supported with courage: but their joy is boundless when they are able to triumph over a Christian."<sup>4</sup> In other words, the order of the day was to make, not martyrs, but apostates.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> We have abundant information concerning the persecution of Decius. Our sources are: (1) letters (amongst others, *Epist.*, viii, xxv, xxxiv, li, lvii) and the treatise *De lapsis* of St. Cyprian; (2) letters of Dionysius of Alexandria to Fabius of Antioch (Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xli-xlii), to Domitian and Didymus (*ibid.*, VII, xi, 20), to Germanus (*ibid.*, VI, xl); (3) *Passions* of martyrs; but only those of Pionius (Ruinart, *Acta sincera*, p. 120; Knopf, *Ausgewählte Martyreracten*, 2nd edn., p. 56), and apparently of Carpus (cf. *infra*, p. 796, n. 24) can be used with complete confidence; (4) some forty Egyptian *papyri* containing certificates of sacrifice delivered by the Roman authorities to apostates: the names, followed by a study of their content, will be found in A. Bludau, *Die Aegyptischen Libelli und die Christenverfolgung des Kaisers Decius* (27 *Supplementheft* of the *Römische Quartalschrift*, 1931).

<sup>3</sup> In Egypt, a priestess of the god Petesuchos was put to the test. Cf. Bludau, *op. cit.*, p. 3, no. 3. But this priestess may have been the subject of suspicion.

<sup>4</sup> Origen, *Contra Celsum*, viii.

<sup>5</sup> *De lapsis*, vii-ix. Cf. Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xli.

### *The Great Number of Apostasies*

Many were in fact made. Numerous Christians, softened by a long period of peace, could not bear the idea of torture, and also it may perhaps have seemed to more than one of them that torments could be escaped almost without renunciation, by agreeing sometimes to a simple action which would indeed have the value of a disavowal to the representative of authority, but was not a formal abjuration. In short, as St. Cyprian testifies, there were apostates without number, but of several kinds. Some, who were called *sacrificati*, agreed really to offer sacrifices to the gods; others, *thurificati*, merely burnt incense before the divine images, and chiefly that of the Emperor; others again had their names inscribed in the public registers as having satisfied the law, or else obtained, usually for money, certificates (*libelli*) attesting that they had obeyed the imperial orders: these were the *acta facientes* or *libellatici*.

### *Martyrs at Rome*

Besides the weak, there were some intrepid confessors of the faith who paid for their fidelity to Christ with their lives, often after cruel torments. One of the first of these, if not the first of all, was the bishop of Rome himself, Fabian, who suffered martyrdom four months after the accession of Decius, on January 20th, 250.<sup>6</sup> Several members of the Roman clergy and a great number of layfolk of both sexes were imprisoned. One of them, the African Celerinus, was, after weeks in chains, set free by a sudden indulgence of the emperor.<sup>7</sup> Others died in irons, such as the priest Moises;<sup>8</sup> others again, such as Calocerius and Parthenius, whom the *Hieronymian Martyrology* attach to the Imperial household,<sup>9</sup> shed their blood in the summer of 250. The martyrologists also put under Decius the death at Rome of two Easterns, Abdon and Sennen.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>6</sup> *Liberian Catalogue*, in *Liber pontificalis*, ed. Duchesne, Vol. I, p. 4. St. Cyprian, *Epist.*, iii.

<sup>7</sup> St. Cyprian, *Epist.*, xxiv.

<sup>8</sup> St. Cyprian, *Ibid.*, lv; Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xliii, 20.

<sup>9</sup> May 19th.

<sup>10</sup> *Mart. Hier.*, August 1st. Cf. Ruinart, *Acta sincera*, p. 693. Their *Acts* are without historical value. But we can accept the designation of Easterns, if not Persians, given to them, for the cemetery of Pontian, where they were buried, was in the middle of the Eastern quarter. Cf. Dufourcq, *Etude sur les Gesta martyrum romains*, Vol. I, p. 239.

Several victims of the persecutions in Italy are attributed to the reign of Decius by various *Passions*, such as that of St. Agatha at Catania,<sup>11</sup> but these are not sufficiently certain to justify acceptance of the narratives. But at least it is certain that Christianity was already, in the middle of the third century, too widespread in Italy for the imperial orders to lead to victims only in Rome.

### *The Persecution in Gaul and Spain*

Of the application of these orders in Gaul we know nothing, for if St. Saturninus of Toulouse indeed suffered martyrdom under Decius,<sup>12</sup> he is represented in his *Acts* as having perished in a rising of the populace,<sup>13</sup> while St. Denis of Paris may not have been put to death till the reign of Valerian.<sup>14</sup>

Similarly, we do not know who were the martyrs of Spain, but this does not mean that there were none. The Church of that country had to suffer shame from two bishops, Basilides of Legio (Leon) and Asturica Augusta (Astorga), and Martial of Emerita (Merida), the first of whom purchased from the magistrates a certificate of sacrifice, while the second agreed to sign a declaration of apostasy.<sup>15</sup> The indignation caused by their conduct is the best proof that the Spanish Christians did not all cut so poor a figure as did these two bishops.

### *In Africa*

Africa produced a number of failures of varying gravity, from the ranks of the simple faithful up to that of the episcopate. The great bishop of Carthage at that time, St. Cyprian, in his intelligent charity, insisted on distinguishing between the veritable apostates, who really deserved the name of *lapsi* or fallen ones, and the simple *libellatici*. St. Cyprian, who was to give his life in a subsequent persecution but who, in presence of the spectacle of indecision and pusillanimity presented by a part of his flock, thought it necessary to continue to direct it, sought for himself a retreat from which he could exercise this direction in comparative safety. But there were also numbers of the faithful who were thrown into prison, where

<sup>11</sup> *Acta Sanctorum, Februarii*, Vol. I, p. 621.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. above, p. 776.

<sup>13</sup> In Ruinart, *Acta sincera*, p. 110.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. above, p. 776.

<sup>15</sup> St. Cyprian, *Epist.*, lxvii.

many died of hunger, and others again who were put to the torture, to which some succumbed, such as Paul, Fortunio, Bassus, Mapalicus and their companions.<sup>16</sup>

### *In Egypt*

In Egypt also there were many apostates and *libellatici*. People in position and of means were the most inclined to sacrifice.<sup>17</sup> But there were sufficient martyrs to uphold the honour of the Church: scaffolds were erected in Alexandria for the intrepid confessors; women, after long and cruel torments, were beheaded; soldiers whose Christianity was revealed when other Christians were being executed were likewise put to death.<sup>18</sup> In towns and villages, the test of sacrifice was imposed upon all, and led to many sentences of death, as well as to many apostasies.<sup>19</sup> True, the Egyptian peasants, not too well disposed towards the representatives of the Roman authority, sometimes took a real pleasure in withholding fugitives from the pursuits of justice. This we see well from the case of the bishop of Alexandria, Dionysius: imitating the conduct of Cyprian at Carthage, he hid himself, was then captured, but set free in spite of himself by a group of peasants. He was able subsequently to return to his episcopal city and there to relate in celebrated letters the chief events in the Egyptian persecution. Another noted Christian never returned home, if at least we may trust the edifying life written by St. Jerome: Paul, a rich and cultivated inhabitant of the Thebaid, took refuge in the mountains, where he lived in a cave near to a spring; there he took so great a delight in the solitary and meditative life that, having left his home when he was 23, he was still there in his cave when he died at the age of 113: he was the first Christian hermit, and the founder of monachism.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>16</sup> St. Cyprian, *Epist.*, viii and xxi.

<sup>17</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xli.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. the study of Bludau mentioned above, p. 792, n. 2.

<sup>19</sup> Letters to Germanus and to Fabius of Antioch quoted in Eusebius., *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xl-xlii.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. St. Jerome, *Vita Pauli*. The historicity of this life is a much-discussed question. No other testimony corroborates the existence of Paul of Thebes. But the famous St. Anthony was not the first solitary in Egypt; there were ascetics before him in the desert, and he himself learnt in the school of one of these. The existence of Paul is therefore quite probable. Jerome probably says of him more than was really known, but doubtless he did not wholly invent his *Life*. It is a somewhat fictional and suspected story, but not a pure romance. Cf. P. de Labriolle, *Vie de Paul de Thèbes et Vie d'Hilarion*, Paris.

*In Asia*

There were also martyrs in Epirus,<sup>21</sup> Greece, and Crete, where perhaps was condemned amongst others the bishop of Gortyna, Cyril,<sup>22</sup> and again in other hellenic islands. But one of the most celebrated victims of the Decian persecution belonged to Asiatic Greece; Pionius, a priest of the church of Smyrna, whose bishop, Eudaemon, unworthy successor of Polycarp, had offered sacrifice. It is to be noted that, according to the *Passion* of Pionius, the Jews seem to have been then, at Smyrna if not elsewhere, particularly busy against the Christians. The *Passion* does not say that they were the cause of the arrest of Pionius. But the pagans adopted a less malevolent attitude: they would have preferred to conquer the resistance of Pionius and save him. He was imprisoned, brought before the magistrate, and we might almost say entreated at length but vainly by the crowd, by the municipal magistrate, and finally by the proconsul Julius Proculus Quintilianus, to offer sacrifice like his bishop, and was finally delivered to the flames.<sup>23</sup>

Other cities of the province of Asia, Ephesus, Lampsacus and Pergamus, where Carpus the bishop suffered,<sup>24</sup> produced heroic victims; similarly the provinces of Bithynia, Pontus, Cappadocia and Roman Armenia (Armenia Minor), made famous by the name of Polyeuctes, whose martyrdom, however, is not among those

<sup>21</sup> The martyr Terinus suffered at Buthroton under Decius, according to the Panegyric of St. Arsenius, ed. Lambros, *Κερκυραϊκά ἀνέκδοτα* (Athens, 1882, pp. 11-12, 20-22. Cf. Ugolini, *Il cristianesimo e l'organizzazione ecclesiastica a Burinto (Albania)* in *Orientalia cristiana periodica*, II (1936), pp. 309-319.

<sup>22</sup> His *Acts* (Surius, *Vitas Sanctorum*, July 9th), which are far from inspiring perfect confidence, put his martyrdom under Decius, but the Greek hagiographical collection of *Menaia* (July 9th) put it under Diocletian. Finally, the *Hieronymian Martyrology* makes him a martyr of Egypt, and not of Crete.

<sup>23</sup> The *Acts* of Pionius (cf. above, p. 792, n. 2) are not an immediate account of the facts: they seem to be a literary embellishment, but not a legendary deformation, of a more sober Greek original. Eusebius has summarised them (*Hist. eccles.*, IV, xv). He links them with those of Polycarp, as though the two martyrs were contemporaries; the error in this chronological linking is explained by the identity of place. Although the *Acts* give no date, their contents show that they belong to the persecution of Decius, and the *Chronicle of Alexandria* confirms this.

<sup>24</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, IV, xv, 48. *Acta*, with no indication of date, published by Aubé, *L'Eglise et l'Etat dans la seconde moitié du IIIe siècle*, pp. 499-506. Cf. Harnack, *Die Akten des Carpus, des Papyrus und Agathonikè*, in *Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur*, Vol. III, 3, 4, Leipzig, 1888, pp. 440 *et seq.*, and Duchesne, *Histoire ancienne de l'Eglise*, Vol. I, p. 266, n. 1, and 368, n. 1.

recommended by the Church, for he voluntarily provoked it by tearing up the persecuting imperial edict posted up in Melitene.<sup>25</sup>

Several bishops of great cities in the Asiatic provinces were put to death or perished in prison. Among the latter was Alexander of Jerusalem, who had in 212 succeeded the centenarian bishop Narcissus, having previously been his coadjutor. He had founded in his episcopal city a celebrated library and, together with the bishop of the provincial metropolis, Caesarea, the Catechetical School in that city, in which Origen taught after leaving Alexandria.<sup>26</sup> The bishop of Antioch in Syria, St. Babylas, who is said to have given a penance to the emperor Philip,<sup>27</sup> confessed the Faith, either by the bloody martyrdom mentioned by St. John Chrysostom,<sup>28</sup> or by the lengthy trial of imprisonment, as was said a hundred years earlier by Eusebius, who was probably better informed.<sup>29</sup> Nestor, bishop of Magydos in Pamphylia, was courteously interrogated by the eirenarch in the presence of the city council, and then taken to the legate, who had him tortured and crucified.<sup>30</sup> On the other hand, Acacius<sup>31</sup> who, according to *Acts* which are lacking in historical precision, was apparently bishop of Antioch in Pisidia, unless he was a *chorepiscopus*, i.e. a country auxiliary of the bishop of Antioch in Syria,<sup>32</sup> was finally released by the emperor, to whom the legate, nonplussed by his calm firmness, had transmitted the report of the interrogation.

As Decius aimed at obtaining the apostasy of Christians rather than their death, it is not surprising that a teacher of the authority of Origen was arrested at Caesarea, where he was then teaching, and imprisoned, and that all efforts were made to obtain his defection. He was several times put to the torture, but remained firm.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>25</sup> On the case of Polyeuctus, cf. E. Le Blant, *Polyeucte et le zèle téméraire*, in *Memoirs of the Académie des Inscriptions*, Vol. XXVIII, 1876, 2nd part, pp. 335-352. The *Acts* of Polyeuctus, in the form of a fourth-century homily, were found and published by B. Aubé, *Polyeucte dans l'Histoire, Etude sur le martyre de Polyeucte, d'après des documents inédits*, Paris, 1882.

<sup>26</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xxxix and xl.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 761.

<sup>28</sup> *De sancto Babyla*.

<sup>29</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xxxix, 4.

<sup>30</sup> *Acta SS., Februarii*, Vol. III, p. 629.

<sup>31</sup> In Ruinart, *Acta sincera*, pp. 1304 *et seq.*

<sup>32</sup> Such is at least the hypothesis formulated by Harnack (*Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums*, 2nd edn., p. 183, n. 1).

<sup>33</sup> Eusebius (*Hist. eccles.*, VI, xiv, 10, and xxxix, 5), from whom we derive these details concerning the imprisonment and torture of Origen, says, in the

His imprisonment ceased towards the end of 251 after the death of Decius, but he cannot long have survived the sufferings he had endured.

### *Diminution and End of the Persecution*

By that time the majority of the prisoners were already set free. The persecution slowed down after the end of 250. The following Spring tranquillity seemed to return; the fugitives reappeared and the bishops openly took over once more the governing of their churches, which began to reassemble. Decius himself perished at the end of the summer. Security was then complete: St. Cyprian was able to call a Council at Carthage.<sup>34</sup> The church of Rome, which had remained without a bishop since the martyrdom of Fabian, was able after fifteen months to appoint his successor, Cornelius.<sup>35</sup>

### *Renewal under Gallus*

But it was only a calm. The successor to Decius, Trebonianus Gallus, renewed the persecution,<sup>36</sup> but for motives which were very different from those of his predecessor. Decius had tried to destroy Christianity for reasons of State; Gallus yielded to a sudden outburst of popular hostility on the occasion of a terrible plague which began to ravage the Empire at the end of 251. The new Pope Cornelius was arrested. But courage was now greater: the faithful went in a body to the tribunal where their bishop was to be judged, and proclaimed their own faith. Did this manifestation impress Authority, which could already see that the immense effort made by Decius had not succeeded? At any rate, Cornelius was only exiled, and to a place only a few leagues from Rome, Centumcellae (Civita Vecchia). He died there in 253. His successor, Lucius, was also

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first of these passages, that Origen was surnamed ἀδαμάντιος, which could be translated as "man of steel." But he does not establish a link between his intrepid resistance to torture and this name.

<sup>34</sup> St. Cyprian, *Epist.*, lii.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. I, p. cclx.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. St. Cyprian, *Epist.*, lix, 6, and Dionysius of Alexandria, *Epistola ad Hermammōn* (in Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VII, x), which are the two sources concerning this renewal of hostilities, on which we have little information as to details.

removed from Rome immediately after his election, but recalled the following year. Gallus had then been ousted by Aemilianus, who was in turn replaced by P. Licinius Valerianus (Valerian), who at first showed himself decidedly favourable to the Christians.

### *Failure of the Persecution*

In fine, the first great general and methodical attempt, and one which at first seemed implacable, to destroy Christianity by a law compelling all Christians to make an act of official adhesion to the pagan religion, had failed. Long lines of Christians without courage had presented themselves before the magistrates to offer sacrifice, and many had obtained, without really offering, certificates which seemed to make them apostates; but they were apostates only in appearance, and not internally. And how many had been able to evade the searches of the police, or had not even fallen under suspicion? The practical result of the persecution was almost nil; it is possible even that the Church was in the end strengthened, for the martyrs had been sufficiently numerous for their example to be an efficacious stimulus: this became evident when Gallus renewed the fight. There is something more: already under Decius, a sentiment of pity or of dislike for the shedding of blood displayed itself in the pagan public<sup>37</sup>—a sentiment doubtless subject to changes. Nevertheless, public opinion began to be modified.

### *Religious Difficulties Resulting from the Persecution. The Question of the Lapsed*

The Decian persecution, however, left behind it a heavy burden of internal difficulties for the Church. The repentant *lapsi* asked to be reinstated in the ranks of the faithful even before the end of the persecution, and in Africa many confessors, relying on the authority which their heroism had given them in the eyes of the Church, did not hesitate to give the repentant ones letters of remission, *libelli pacis*, which dispensed them from penance. This unexpected alliance of confessors and apostates, and the excessive

<sup>37</sup> For instance, the torture of St. Carpus and his companions at Pergamum led to murmurs, if not to open protests. For various texts of the *Acts of Martyrs* giving like indications, and discussions, especially chronological, to which they have led, see P. Allard, *Histoire des persécutions pendant la première moitié du IIIe siècle*, 3rd edn., Paris, 1905, pp. 426 et seq.



indulgence of the former, was bound to meet with resistance from ecclesiastical authority, and St. Cyprian protested with firmness as well as with gentleness. But he could not prevent a schism, the chief instigator of which was the priest Novatus, with Fortunatus as the bishop of the dissidents. The sect, however, took the name of the deacon Felicissimus, who had been one of the leaders of the movement from its beginning. The schism did not last long, as we shall see later on.<sup>38</sup>

The same cannot be said of the schism which, for reasons the opposite of those which prevailed in Africa, resulted from the Decian persecution at Rome, and which affected a great part of the Church.<sup>39</sup> When, many months after the death of Pope Fabian, it became possible to appoint a new occupant for the chair of Peter, Cornelius was not elected without opposition, and a party of rigorists set up against him a priest who was prominent among the Roman clergy and a distinguished writer and eloquent orator, Novatian. Cornelius promised pardon to repentant *lapsi*; Novatian, an extremist for severity as Novatus was at Carthage for indulgence, refused to pardon any. He gathered many people around him, and then, outside Rome, numerous disciples flocked to this church of the holy and the pure, *Καθαροί* as they were called in the East, where the movement developed greatly. This schismatic church was to continue down to the seventh century, and from time to time a fairly large number of Montanists helped to swell its ranks.

## § 2. THE PERSECUTION UNDER VALERIAN

### *Valerian at First Well Disposed towards Christians*

The first years which followed the persecution under Gallus were years of complete peace for the Church. Though the new emperor had been one of Decius's lieutenants,<sup>1</sup> he did not necessarily share his ideas. He had seen the failure of Decius's measures

<sup>38</sup> Cf. *infra*, p. 851 *et seq.*

<sup>39</sup> Cf. *infra*, p. 852 *et seq.*

<sup>1</sup> The *Historia Augusta* says that Decius had given Valerian the title of censor, with extraordinary powers, making him a sort of vice-emperor, which would indicate a similarity of views. But the isolated testimony of the *Historia Augusta*, the mediocre value of which is known, may well be a fantasy contrary to historic fact.

against Christianity, and had been able to profit thereby. From 254 to 257 Christians had cause only to be thankful for their new sovereign. Several of them held offices in the palace, which was even compared to "a church of God."<sup>2</sup> The Christian sympathies of Salonina, wife of Gallienus heir to the Empire, may in part explain the undeniably favourable attitude of Valerian towards the Church.<sup>3</sup>

### *Renewal of Hostilities, and its Causes*

But the evil days were not long in returning. Evil days for the Empire: assaults by barbarians, Franks, Allemanni and other Germans, on the frontiers of the Rhine and the Danube, incursions of increasing boldness of Goths on the shores of the Black Sea and even as far as the Aegean, a rising of the Berbers in Africa, and the invasion of Mesopotamia by the Persians under King Sapor, who penetrated as far as Antioch.<sup>4</sup> The ground was thus well prepared for any fanatics who would once more stir up the minds of the people against those who had always been denounced as a public danger, even though at certain times the authorities, and public opinion, had seemed to appreciate the value of their virtues. One of the emperor's counsellors, Macrienus, an enthusiastic disciple of oriental cults which were bitter rivals of Christianity, seems to have been the instigator of a new outburst of hostility. Possibly the great riches thought to be possessed by the Church, which certainly gave away much in alms and already possessed important properties, likewise aroused envy in a period when the Empire was itself passing through a severe economic crisis. In short, the war against the Church was renewed, and though the methods differed from those employed by Decius, it was equally implacable.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> St. Dionysius of Alexandria, *Epistola ad Hermammon*, in Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VII, x, 3.

<sup>3</sup> Medals of the Empress Salonina, with the inscription "Augusta in pace," have led some to think that she was completely converted to Christianity. The inference is legitimate, but it is not certain. Possibly she merely professed a more or less Christianised Syncretism.

<sup>4</sup> The taking of Antioch in the reign of Valerian is questioned: cf. Tillemont, *Histoire des Empereurs: L'Empereur Valérien*, note X. In any case there is no doubt as to the seriousness of the Persian invasion of the East.

<sup>5</sup> On the Valerian persecution, we have (1) the letters of St. Dionysius of Alexandria to Hermammon (in Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VII, x) and Germanus (*ibid.*, VII, xi); (2) St. Cyprian, *Epistolae*, lxxvi-lxxix; (3) a relatively large number of *Passions* of historic value, such as those of St. Cyprian, SS. Marian

*First Persecuting Edict*

The attack, however, proceeded by stages, possibly because the emperor and his advisers began by hoping that moderate measures would have some effect, and also thought that if they struck first at the heads the life of the whole Christian body would be affected. Hence a first edict was issued in August 257, which concerned immediately only the higher clergy, from bishops to deacons, who were commanded to sacrifice to the gods of the Empire, the celebration of Christian worship and visits to the cemeteries being forbidden. The emperor however claimed that he was not preventing the disciples of Christ from honouring their God in private. This is very plain evidence of the influence of the syncretistic conception of religion upon the counsels of the Empire: the Christian God will occupy a place among the numerous divinities which the emperor's subjects are free to worship in private, but the profession of any such private religion must be accompanied by the practice of the official rites. Disobedience to the command of sacrifice meant exile, and infringement of the prohibitions involved the punishment of death.

We know how the edict was applied in two of the biggest episcopal sees in the Empire, Alexandria and Carthage. St. Dionysius and St. Cyprian appeared respectively before the competent magistrates, and on their refusal to obey were interned in places assigned to them. Almost at the same time, other African bishops, priests, deacons, and even ordinary layfolk were condemned by the legate of Numidia to forced labour in the mines, which was juridically a capital penalty: they had evidently infringed the order forbidding Christian assemblies.

*Second Edict*

Very soon the imperial government decided that these first measures were ineffective, or at least not sufficiently strong. A second edict in 258 laid it down that the higher clergy who had not obeyed should be executed without delay; laymen of high rank were to be deprived of their dignities and to have their possessions confiscated, and if this punishment did not make them repent, they

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and James, the martyrs of the *Massa Candida* in Africa, and St. Fructuosus in Spain; (4) the *Life* of St. Cyprian by his deacon Pontius; (5) Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xii.

were to suffer capital punishment; their wives also would lose their possessions and be banished. Lastly, the numerous personnel in the imperial household, i.e. not only the palace servants, but also employés in the large Crown properties scattered throughout the Empire, were also to suffer confiscation, and then to be chained and condemned to forced labour in the agricultural or mining works of the Emperor.

### *Martyrs at Rome*

The application of this edict was immediate and extremely rigorous. From the beginning of August, the already considerable wealth of the Roman Church had tempted the imperial treasury and led to the deaths of Pope Sixtus II and his deacons, among them being St. Laurence, who, according to a *Passion* which unfortunately has little historical value, was burnt on a gridiron over a slow fire for refusing to deliver up the treasures of the Church,<sup>6</sup> and who has always received a special veneration from Christians.

It was also at that time that, as access to the cemeteries was forbidden and Christian assemblies there rendered impossible, the bodies of Saints Peter and Paul were doubtless removed secretly from the cemeteries in the Via Cornelia in the Vatican and the Ostian Way, and deposited *ad Catacumbas*, where the piety of the faithful was still able to give them discreet honour.<sup>7</sup> Some Chris-

<sup>6</sup> The earliest document we have on the *Passion* of St. Laurence is a passage in the *De officiis* of St. Ambrose (I, 41), obviously inspired by a *Passion* already in circulation in his time but possibly written half a century after the events. Père H. Delehay (Recherches sur le Légendier romain, in *Analecta Bollandiana*, Vol. LI, 1933, pp. 34-98) has shown its legendary character. The fact that the tradition of the torture of St. Laurence by fire is also found in Damasian inscriptions (*Damasi Epigrammata*, ed. Ihm, Leipzig, 1895, p. 37) and the iconographic diffusion of the gridiron symbol (medals, jewels, and the mosaic in the mausoleum of Galla Placidia at Ravenna, on which see articles Gril and Laurent (St.) in *Dictionnaire d'Archéologie chrétienne*, and J. Zeiller, *Sur une mosaïque du mausolée de Galla Placidia à Ravenne*, in *Comptes-rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions*, 1934, pp. 43 et seq.), might suggest a more favourable judgment. But the edict of Valerian certainly seems to have condemned only to death, without slow torture. Perhaps the legend concerning St. Laurence was formed, at least in part, under the influence of accounts of the Spanish deacon Vincent, who was extended on a red-hot bed, as the martyr Attalus of Lyons had been placed in a red-hot chair. On this comparison with Vincent, see Pio Franchi de' Cavalieri, *San Lorenzo e il supplicia della graticula*, in *Römische Quartalsschrift*, Vol. XIV, 1900, pp. 159 et seq.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. above, Bk. I, pp. 290-293.

tians who had ignored the prohibition were buried alive in the underground places where they had been praying.<sup>8</sup>

### *In Africa*

The African Church was decimated. Cyprian of Carthage was dragged from his hiding place and brought before the proconsul Galerius Maximus. The account of his appearance has been preserved.<sup>9</sup> It was quite brief:

"The most holy emperors have ordained that you are to offer sacrifice."

"I will not do it."

"Take care."

"Do what you have been commanded to do. In so clear a matter there is no need to deliberate."

The magistrate pronounced sentence: "We ordain that Thascius Cyprianus is to be put to death by the sword." "Thanks be to God," replied Cyprian. He went to his death in presence of a crowd of pagans, whose respectful silence contrasted with the anti-Christian shouts which had been heard in other times, and in the midst of his whole flock who placed around him cloths to receive his blood. In the evening his body was taken to a private burial place, while hymns were sung. Rarely had it been more evident what could be the love of an entire Christian community for its head who was at the same time its father.

Other bishops, at first exiled, were recalled in order to be put to death. The deacon James and the lector Marienus, arrested near Cirta,<sup>10</sup> were beheaded at Lambessa, the seat of the legate of Numidia, with a number of layfolk, condemned doubtless for unlawful assemblies. Their *Passion*,<sup>11</sup> recorded by one of their companions, and one of the best still extant among so many similar documents which have disappeared in the course of time or through

<sup>8</sup> St. Gregory of Tours, *De gloria martyrum*, I, 38.

<sup>9</sup> *Acta proconsularia sancti Cypriani* (Ruinart, *Acta sincera*, pp. 217 et seq.; Knopf, *Ausgewählte Martyrerakten*, pp. 71 et seq.).

<sup>10</sup> Here a celebrated inscription known as that of the *Martyres Hortenses*, still partially obscure, has kept their memory graven in stone (*Corpus inscriptionum latinarum*, VIII, 7324).

<sup>11</sup> Ruinart, *Acta sincera*, pp. 226 et seq. Critical edn. by Franchi de' Cavalieri, Rome, 1900.

later troubles, says that the condemned were so numerous that the executions lasted several days.

At Utica there perished a compact group of martyrs known as the *Massa candida*.<sup>12</sup> They had at their head the bishop Quadratus, as we learn from a sermon of St. Augustine recently discovered.<sup>13</sup> Very many others died in various places, among them being the clerics Montanus and Lucius, with their companions, including two catechumens, in the proconsular Province.<sup>14</sup>

### *In Spain and Gaul*

Spain had amongst many others a glorious martyr in the person of Bishop Fructuosus of Tarragona, who was burnt alive with his deacons Augurus and Eulogus.<sup>15</sup> The victims in Gaul are little known; we can attribute to the Valerian persecution with sufficient probability only the martyrdom of Patroclus, beheaded at Troyes in January 259,<sup>16</sup> and that of Denis of Paris, the date of which remains uncertain, as we have said.<sup>17</sup> On the other hand, it is possible that some Christians of Auvergne may have perished in the reign of Valerian, through bands of Alemannic barbarians who under a leader named Chrocus then ravaged the country, according to St. Gregory of Tours.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>12</sup> "Massa, because of their great number, *Candida* because of the brilliance of their victory," says St. Augustine (*Sermo cccvi*). But the name might also have been given because their bodies were interred in quicklime, as seems to be suggested by the account, probably legendary, given by Prudentius, *Peristephanon*, XIII, 76-87, according to which these martyrs were compelled to throw themselves into a ditch of quicklime.

<sup>13</sup> Dom G. Morin, *La Massa Candida et le martyr Quadratus d'après deux sermons inédits de saint Augustin*, in *Atti della Pontificia Accademia di Archeologia*, series III, Rendiconti, Vol. III, ann. 1924-1925, Rome, 1925, pp. 289-313.

<sup>14</sup> Ruinart, *Acta sincera*, p. 233. Critical edition by Franchi de' Cavalieri, Rome, 1898.

<sup>15</sup> Ruinart, *ibid.*, p. 220, reproduced in a poetical form in the *Peristephanon* of Prudentius, VI (fifth century). Cf. also St. Augustine, *Sermo ccxiii*, 2, and *Sermo cclxiii*, 3.

<sup>16</sup> *Acta sanctorum, Januarii*, Vol. II, p. 342.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. above, p. 794.

<sup>18</sup> *Historia francorum*, I, xxxii-xxxiv, ed. K. Arndt, in *Monumenta Germaniae historica, Scriptores rerum merovingicarum*, Vol. I, Hanover, 1885, p. 49. The controverted question of the "martyrs of Chrocus" has been treated by the Abbé G. Bardy (*Recherches sur un cycle hagiographique, Les martyrs de Chrocus*, in *Revue d'Histoire de l'Eglise de France*, Vol. XXI, 1935, pp. 5 et seq.). He concludes that Gregory of Tours, well informed on Auvergne, his own country, can be followed when he puts the invasion of Chrocus and the victims it caused among the Christians, in the reign of Valerian. But it is more difficult to accept

*In the East*

The East, whither Valerian went to direct personally his campaign against Persia, could not escape. In Palestine, Christians in the country parts were able to hide themselves, but the executions were very numerous.<sup>19</sup> The names of Paregorius and of the ascetic Leo<sup>20</sup> have survived of the martyrs of Lycia, and among those of Cappadocia, the name of Cyril, when still a child.<sup>21</sup>

*Close of the reign of Valerian and End of the persecution. The peaceful edict of Gallienus*

The Persian catastrophe put an end to the persecution. In 259 Valerian made for Edessa, besieged by the Persians. Pestilence weakened his army; defeat ensued, and Valerian thought it necessary to try to come to terms. King Sapor profited by an interview to make him prisoner. Macrienus was able to continue for a little while the rigours Valerian had instigated. But Gallienus, son and successor to the late emperor, professed quite different sentiments, and these soon manifested themselves. He published an edict, the text of which we do not possess, ordering a cessation of the proceedings; then, doubtless at the request of bishops who thought him sufficiently well disposed to justify their asking for the restitution of the confiscated churches and cemeteries, he granted this in rescripts which confirmed to them the free exercise of their office as heads of churches.<sup>22</sup>

### § 3. THE RELIGIOUS PEACE AND PROGRESS OF THE CHURCH FROM GALLIENUS TO DIOCLETIAN

*Toleration under Gallienus*

The edict and rescripts of Gallienus constituted the first official declaration of toleration in respect of Christianity published by the

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that we must include among these victims a bishop of Mende, St. Privatus. The establishment of a bishop at Mende is certainly much later. Cf. above, pp. 774-778.

<sup>19</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xii.

<sup>20</sup> *Acts of SS. Leo and Paregorius* (Ruinart, *Acta sincera*, p. 610).

<sup>21</sup> Ruinart, *Acta sincera*, p. 253.

<sup>22</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xiii.

imperial authority. The rescript addressed to the bishops Dionysius, Pinna and Demetrius says: "I have decided to spread abroad throughout the whole world the benefit of my generosity, so that places of worship may be evacuated and you may in consequence enjoy what is laid down in my rescript without interference by anyone."<sup>1</sup> On this day the Church entered a period of real peace, and one which was no longer precarious in character like the preceding periods, although liberty of conscience and of worship, to use modern terminology, were not as yet the subject of a declaration of principle. This was not to come till half a century later.

The peace lasted some forty years, disturbed perhaps here and there by isolated incidents which were always possible, and threatened sometimes by an offensive return of imperial hostility, while at other times the attitude of authority became even one of open benevolence.

### *Acts of Isolated Hostility under Gallienus*

Immediately after the proclamation of toleration by Gallienus there were still some rigorous measures, for Macrienus, who continued in the East and had proclaimed his sons emperors there, had not disarmed. Thus, Caesarea in Palestine witnessed the martyrdom of the *optio* Marinus, a subaltern due to be promoted centurion.<sup>2</sup>

### *Doubtful Acts under Claudius the Goth*

Fairly numerous *Acts* which are, however, of doubtful value, would lead us to think that Christian blood was shed in Rome and in Italy under Claudius the Goth. Popular fanaticism, reappearing at intervals, and the animosity of the Senate or of magistrates who could always find in the ancient laws texts which would justify rigorous measures, would suffice to explain these executions, and there is no need to suppose that there was a new edict expressly abrogating that of Gallienus. But in any case the texts reporting these incidents are too weakly supported to require full acceptance.

### *Aurelian dies before signing an Edict of Persecution*

On the other hand, the emperor Aurelian (270-275), who endeavoured to fuse all the cults of the Empire into a solar monothe-

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xv.



ism derived from the East and proclaimed to be the State religion, was logically bound to proceed to persecute Christians. Nevertheless he at first allowed the legislative arrangements of Gallienus to remain in force, and it was in conformity with this legal recognition of Christianity in the Empire that one day he took a decision showing plainly what were at that time the relations between the Church and the Roman State. The Bishop of Antioch, Paul of Samosata, had, as we narrate elsewhere,<sup>3</sup> been deposed for heresy by a Council, and a conflict broke out between him and his successor concerning the possession of the episcopal church. The parties appealed to the judgment of the emperor himself, who was then staying at Antioch, and who ordained that the church should be handed over to the bishop recognised by the bishop of Rome and his colleagues in Italy (272).<sup>4</sup> Persecuting edicts were, however, prepared two years later, when the work of religious reorganisation planned by Aurelian was concluded: willingly or unwillingly, the Christian religion was to enter into the scheme or disappear. But before the edicts were signed, Aurelian perished in Thrace, a victim of a conspiracy organised by one of his freedmen (275).<sup>5</sup>

### *The Peace under the Successors of Aurelian and the Emperors of the Tetrarchy*

The Peace, endangered for a moment, but thus preserved, continued under the immediate successors of Aurelian, and then under Diocletian and his colleagues of the Imperial Tetrarchy, the Augustus Maximian Hercules and the Caesars Constantius Chlorus and Galerius, for a quarter of a century. Under Diocletian, toleration even changed into favour, for steps were taken to help Christians to reconcile their conscientious obligations with participation in public affairs. Eusebius is careful to point out<sup>6</sup> that in this period, in which the Church enjoyed a peace more complete than she had ever known before, Christians had been able to become governors of provinces and act as high magistrates, and that to this

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Bk. IV.

<sup>4</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxx.

<sup>5</sup> *Historia Augusta: Vita Aureliani*, xxxv-xxxvi and xli. Incidents of local persecution may have taken place here and there. Cf. above, p. 771, for Illyricum, and p. 772, n. 6 for Gaul.

<sup>6</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VIII, i, 2.

end they had been dispensed from offering sacrifices. Eusebius goes on to say, with evident exaggeration, speaking of the princes, that this was because of "the great inclination they themselves had towards our belief."

### *Favourable Situation of the Church in the Time of Diocletian*

The future was to show that this inclination was not very marked among certain members at least of the imperial college. But it is none the less true that at that time in the palace itself some very exalted and very powerful influences were exerting themselves in favour of the Church. It seems beyond doubt that the empress Prisca, wife of Diocletian, and their daughter Valeria were, if not full Christians, at least catechumens.<sup>7</sup> Their conversion may perhaps have been due to the numerous faithful then serving in the court of Nicomedia where Diocletian resided, if they had not become Christians earlier still and themselves recruited their Christian staff. However this may be, these palatine Christians were very much respected. "What shall I say," writes Eusebius,<sup>8</sup> "of those of our brethren who served in the palace, and those who commanded them? These latter allowed their servants in their presence a complete freedom of speech and of conduct in matters of religion; the same was true of their spouses, children, and servants; these were all permitted almost to glory freely in their faith, and they were regarded with more favour than the rest." He mentions Dorotheus the Great Chamberlain, and Gorgonius and Peter,<sup>9</sup> also belonging to the royal bedchamber, as having been especially intimate with the imperial family. He also names, among the high magistrates then professing the Christian faith, Philoromus, *juridicus* of Alexandria or chief justice of Egypt,<sup>10</sup> and Adauctus, *comes rei privatae*, superintendent of the private domain and of the imperial finances.<sup>11</sup>

The prescriptions of the Council of Elvira (Illiberis in Spain), held about the year 300,<sup>12</sup> which subjected to a relatively moderate penance those Christians who had been guilty or suspected of some compromise with paganism in the exercise of public functions,

<sup>7</sup> Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutorum*, xv.

<sup>8</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VIII, 1.

<sup>9</sup> The last-mentioned is referred to in another passage (*ibid.*, VIII, vi, 4).

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, VIII, ix, 7.

<sup>11</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VIII, xi, 2.

<sup>12</sup> We deal with this Council in Bk. IV.

constitutes a new proof of the *entente* which *de facto* existed then between the Church and the civil society. Christians must have been more numerous than ever in the army, for when the situation changed once more it was thought necessary to purge it.

At the same time the general movement of conversion was intensified, for the churches were full and new ones had to be built. "How is one to describe," writes Eusebius again in his *Ecclesiastical History*,<sup>13</sup> "these innumerable receptions into the Church, the crowds in the assemblies in each town, and the remarkable concourse of the multitude in the houses of prayer? Indeed, because of these things, henceforth people were not content with the buildings of former days, and in all the cities large and great churches began to rise from the soil. No hatred intervened to prevent us progressing with the times, and each day saw an increase in our numbers."

Christians might well have thought then that they were going to realise the peaceful conquest of the Roman world without further trials. But the close of the reign of Diocletian would undeceive them.

<sup>13</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VIII, i, 5-6.

## CHRISTIAN WRITERS OF AFRICA

§ I. TERTULLIAN<sup>1</sup>*Origins of Christian Latin Literature*

APART from the Octavius of Minucius Felix, which is of uncertain date,<sup>2</sup> Christian Latin literature appears for the first time in 197 with the works of Tertullian.<sup>3</sup>

At Rome, Greek was still at that time the official language of the

<sup>1</sup> Bibliography.—Editions: Migne, P.L., Vols. I-II. F. Oehler, 1851-1854; ed. minor (1854). *Corpus Script. Eccles. Latin.*, Vol. XX, ed. Reifferscheid and Wissowa, 1890: *De spectaculis*, *De idololatria*, *Ad Nation.*, *De animae testim.*, *Scorp.*, *De orat.*, *De baptismo*, *De pudicitia*, *De jejunio*, *De anima*. Ibid., Vol. XLVII, ed. Kroymann, 1906: *De patientia*, *De resurrectione*, *Adversus Her-mogenem*, *Adversus Valentinianos*, *De praescriptione*, *Adv. Praxean*, *Adversus Marcionem*. For the *De paenitentia* and the *De pudicitia*, see also the edition of P. de Labriolle, 1906, in *Textes et Documents*, and for the *De praescriptione haereticorum*, *ibid.*, 1907. For the *Apologeticum*, see ed. J. P. Waltzing, 1930, in collection *Les Belles Lettres*. For the *De baptismo*, see ed. D'Alès, Rome, 1933, in coll. *Textus et Documenta*.

Studies: P. Monceaux, *Histoire littéraire de l'Afrique chrétienne*, Vol. I, 1901; A. D'Alès, *La Théologie de Tertullien*, 1905, *L'Edit de Calliste*, 1914; P. de Labriolle, *Histoire de la littérature latine chrétienne*, 1924, pp. 72-144; Mgr. Freppel, *Tertullien*, 2 vols., 1861-1862; J. Tixeront, *Tertullien moraliste*, in *Mélanges de Patrologie*, 1921, pp. 117-152; U. Moricca, *Storia della Letteratura latina cristiana*, Vol. I, Turin, 1925, pp. 109-368; J. Lortz, *Tertullian als Apologet*, Bonn, 1927-1928, 2 vols.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *supra*, Bk. II, p. 580.

<sup>3</sup> The Acts of the Scillitan martyrs belong to the year 180 (cf. *supra*, Bk. II, pp. 404-405). But this very valuable document is hardly a literary work. St. Jerome writes (*De viris illustribus*, liii): "The priest Tertullian is the first of the Latins after Victor and Apollonius." Of Apollonius we have nothing to say here; his Acts, known to Eusebius (*Hist. eccles.*, V, xxi) have been rediscovered in Armenian by the Mechirists of Vienna (1874), and in Greek by the Bollandists (*Analecta Bollandiana*, 1895, pp. 108-123). Jerome seems to have known them only through Eusebius (Bardenhewer, *Altkirchl. Litteratur*, Vol. II, pp. 623 *et seq.*). We have mentioned Victor in connection with the Easter controversy. Most of the documents concerning it were written in Greek, as, for instance, the letter of Irenæus and that of the Roman synod mentioned by Eusebius (*Hist. eccles.*, V, xxiii, 3). But it seems that there were also some Latin writings, referred to by St. Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, xxxiv; cf. Monceaux, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 52-54. It is noteworthy that the only bishop of Rome of that time who, to our knowledge, wrote in Latin, was an African.

Church.<sup>4</sup> Greek was also not unknown at Carthage, but it had not there a diffusion comparable to that it enjoyed at Rome. Greek inscriptions there are rare; <sup>5</sup> the *Acts* of the Scillitan martyrs are in Latin; the same is true of those of St. Perpetua. At the same time, in the *Acts* of Perpetua, the Latin text is here and there studded with Greek words,<sup>6</sup> and the priest Saturus, narrating his vision, shows us Perpetua conversing in Greek with the bishop Optatus and the priest Aspasius.<sup>7</sup> Tertullian composed some of his works in Greek; he translated them into Latin to ensure their diffusion.

What these facts reveal is confirmed by the study of the epigraphic texts: the Greek language, which was familiar to cultivated people and to the Easterns, was unknown not only to the indigenous population but also to the majority of the Roman colonists.<sup>8</sup>

This prepares us for some of the characteristics of African literature and theology. As Hellenism had scarcely penetrated into Africa, the conception of Christianity there would not be quite the same as that at Rome or Alexandria. On the one hand, we have Clement and Origen; on the other, Tertullian and Cyprian: what a contrast! Clement was full of admiration for Greek philosophy, which he regarded as a gift from God and the schoolmaster who had guided the Greeks towards Christ, as the Law had trained the Jews. Tertullian, on the contrary, writes: "What is there in common between Athens and Jerusalem, between the Academy and the Church, between heretics and Christians? Our teaching comes

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Kauffmann, *Handbuch der altchristlichen Epigraphik*, Freiburg, 1917, p. 30: "The official diffusion of Greek in imperial Rome in the second and third centuries accounts for the fact that in addition to Latin texts we find many Greek ones (in the inscriptions). Thus, all the bishops in the papal catacomb had Greek epitaphs, and it seems that this language was then the language of the Church." The epitaph of Pope Cornelius, who died in 253, is in Latin, but it seems later than the third century; that of Gaius, who died in 296, is in Greek.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Monceaux, *op. cit.*, p. 51, n. 2. We find also a Latin inscription written in Greek characters (*ibid.*, p. 50, n. 8). At Rome there are other examples of this simultaneous use of the two languages or the two alphabets (Kaufmann, *op. cit.*, p. 30).

<sup>6</sup> When Christ receives St. Perpetua into Paradise, he says to her: "Bene venisti, tegnon." On the relation between the Latin and Greek texts of the *Acts*, cf. J. Armitage Robinson, *The Passion of St. Perpetua*, 1891, pp. 2 *et seq.*

<sup>7</sup> Ch. xii, *ibid.*, pp. 82-83.

<sup>8</sup> Latin itself was not spoken in a pure form: Septimius Severus, whose education had been very carefully carried out, always betrayed his origin (he was born at Leptis) by his African accent. It was still worse in the case of his relatives: "His sister came to see him; she could hardly speak Latin and made him blush; he hastened to give the laticlave to her son and to load him with presents, and then to send her back to Leptis with him" (Spartianus, *Severus*, xv, 7).

from Solomon, who himself taught that we must search for God in simplicity of heart. So much the worse for those who have invented a Stoic, Platonist, or Dialectic Christianity."<sup>9</sup> The contrast is perhaps still more marked between Origen and Cyprian, between the theologian whose highest ambition was to contemplate more profoundly the mysteries of God, and the ruler whose whole effort was towards the reformation of life. The latter could have repeated Tacitus's words: "All our counsels, and all our actions ought to aim at making life better."<sup>10</sup> At Alexandria, Clement was heard to say: "If in heaven there were to be a separation between the two inseparable goods, beatitude and the knowledge of God, and I had to choose between them, I would leave aside beatitude, and choose the knowledge of God." At Carthage, on the other hand, Cyprian repeated the sentence of Minucius Felix: "Non eloquimur magna, sed vivimus."<sup>11</sup>

It must also be remembered that in Africa the Latin population at the time we are considering was almost exclusively affected by Christian preaching;<sup>12</sup> but in this continent it had colonised it was superimposed upon an indigenous population with which it had little contact. The Latin population appeared thus as an élite, numerous in Carthage, but elsewhere somewhat scattered. Christianity had spread to a great number of towns, villages and country parts. At the time of Tertullian, a council assembled seventy bishops,<sup>13</sup> and one of the councils presided over by Cyprian numbered eighty-seven.

These figures indicate without any doubt a very extended propagation of Christianity. But they do not tell us the extent of the Christian population governed by these bishops. It must have varied greatly in importance. Carthage, the whole population of which reached and doubtless exceeded half a million inhabitants, dominated this crowd of little municipalities or hamlets; its situation

<sup>9</sup> *De praescriptione*, vii, 9, 11.

<sup>10</sup> *Dialogus de oratoribus*, v.

<sup>11</sup> "It is not our eloquence which is great, but our life" (*De bono patientiae*, iii).

<sup>12</sup> The Berber tribes were reached later, and then only superficially. Cf. P. Jacquin, *La Mission chrétienne*, in *Histoire générale comparée des Missions*, published by Descamps, 1932, pp. 137 *et seq.*

<sup>13</sup> This Council, presided over by Agrippinus, seems to have been contemporary with the *De Baptismo* of Tertullian, between 200 and 206 (D'Alès, *Saint Cyprien*, p. 238). Cf. *Théologie de Tertullien*, p. 228; Cyprian, *Epist.*, lxxii, 4; lxxiii, 3; Augustine, *De unico baptismo contra Petilianum*, xiii-xxii.

was comparable to that of Alexandria in Egypt, but was very different from those of the cities of Asia, which, in spite of their inequality, had their own histories, traditions, and municipal life.<sup>14</sup> The churches varied in importance like the cities themselves, and the bishop of Carthage had an unquestioned authority over all the other African bishops, and especially over those of Proconsular Africa and Numidia.<sup>15</sup>

### *Tertullian: His Intellectual Formation*

Tertullian was born in Paganism<sup>16</sup> between 150 and 160, probably at Carthage. His father, an officer or functionary, had the title of "proconsular centurion." Tertullian led as a pagan a free life, of which he accused himself when he became a Christian,<sup>17</sup> frequenting the "cruel sports" of the amphitheatre.<sup>18</sup> He retained so painful a memory of these that he subsequently wrote: "I prefer to leave much unsaid rather than revive these memories."<sup>19</sup>

Like his contemporary and compatriot Apuleius, Tertullian was trained in Rhetoric. When he had become a Christian and a priest, he one day amused himself by displaying his powers, and about 208 or 209 wrote the *Treatise on the Mantle*, to explain to idlers why he had changed the toga for the pallium. "This treatise is in itself only a witticism, a literary curiosity, and would scarcely deserve a moment's consideration, were it not for the fact that it brings out into full light the tyranny which education exerted even over the minds of those the most completely converted to Christianity."<sup>20</sup> Of greater value than this Rhetoric was the science of Law, which deeply influenced the intellectual formation of Tertullian. It was to put in the hands of the apologist arms which would serve not only for exhibition but also for combat. After the pagans, heretics were in their turn to feel their power: the argu-

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Leclercq, *L'Afrique chrétienne*, Vol. I, pp. 78-83.

<sup>15</sup> Mauretania was regarded as a missionary territory, and depended more directly on Rome. On the propagation of Christianity in Africa, see above, pp. 780-783.

<sup>16</sup> *Apol.*, xviii, 4: "There was a time when we like you laughed at these truths. We came out from your ranks. A man is not born a Christian—he becomes one."

<sup>17</sup> *De resurrectione carnis*, lix: "I know indeed that it is in the same flesh that I once committed adulteries, and now do my best to observe continence."

<sup>18</sup> *Apol.*, xv, 5.

<sup>19</sup> *De spectaculis*, xix.

<sup>20</sup> G. Boissier, *La fin du paganisme*, Vol. I, p. 258. The careful study which Boissier has made of this little work should be read (*ibid.*, pp. 221-259).

ment of prescription, taken from juridical language, will give to the classic thesis on Tradition a new form and efficacy.<sup>21</sup> From this formation Tertullian also derived the habit of condensing his thought into formulæ. Vincent of Lerins already noticed this: "We find in him almost as many sentences as words," and his sentences are so strongly worded that their brilliance dazzles us and they fix themselves in our memory. Who does not remember that "the blood of Christians is a seed,"<sup>22</sup> or recall the "witness of a soul which is naturally Christian"?<sup>23</sup> These gems, so numerous in Tertullian, attract the attention of the reader, but sometimes also they bewilder. One who knows his works well has written of him: "He is without doubt the most difficult Latin writer; no other calls for such great efforts on the part of his readers."<sup>24</sup> He calls for them, but he also obtains them, for one feels very soon that this labour is not in vain, and that under those sparkling facets there generally lies a great idea which is all the more appreciated because of the difficulty in grasping it.

### *The Apologeticum*

Tertullian has not told us about his conversion; we may suppose with likelihood that the motive which led to it is that which he himself so often brings forward: the heroic constancy of the martyrs. His conversion was doubtless quite recent when he wrote the *Ad Nationes* and the *Apologeticum* (197). These two books, and above all the second, reveal to us the apologist; we will add to it the *Adversus Judaeos*, written between 200 and 206, and the *Ad Scapulam*, which belongs to the end of 212.

The *Ad Nationes* preceded the *Apologeticum* by a few months. These two books, written in the same year, defend the same thesis. Accordingly we are not surprised to find in both the same examples and the same arguments, but they are set forth with different aims. The *Ad Nationes* is addressed to the public in general, the *Apologeticum* to the provincial governors. The first work, which answers

<sup>21</sup> Some have wrongly endeavoured to identify Tertullian with a lawyer who lived in the second century and who is known to us by the *Digests*. This hypothesis, defended by Griselhart in 1912 (*Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte aus Tertullian*, Ravensburg, 1912) is well refuted by Lortz (*op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 223).

<sup>22</sup> *Apol.*, i, 13.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, xvii, 6.

<sup>24</sup> Norden, *Antike Kunstprosa*, Vol. II, p. 606.



the complaints of pagans against Christianity, turns these back against the pagan religion. The second aims above all at showing the illegality of the persecutions. The first is a declaration of war against paganism, the second a plea in favour of the Christian religion.<sup>25</sup> But this plea is often couched in an aggressive tone. For Tertullian, to defend means to attack, but the juridical standpoint is the one he chooses. He is the first to adopt it, and hence the *Apologeticum* marks an epoch in the history of Christian literature.

From the very beginning, a rapid sequence of antitheses brings out the contrast between Christians and the criminals of common law. The two groups of accused are contrasted first of all by their attitudes:

Malefactors seek to hide themselves, they try not to show themselves; taken in the act, they tremble; when accused, they deny; even when subjected to torture, they do not confess easily, or always; when condemned, they despair . . . they desire not to be the authors of what they admit to be evil. Does a Christian do anything of the like? Not one blushes, none repents, unless it be of not having become a Christian sooner. If he is denounced, he glories in it; if he is accused, he does not defend himself; when interrogated he himself confesses his faith; when condemned he gives thanks.<sup>26</sup>

### *The Pagan Legal Process*

In the process, the contrasts are no less striking. When the others learn of their accusation, they can defend themselves or arrange for a lawyer to defend them; he pleads and is answered. Christians alone are refused the right to speak: all that they are asked is to confess themselves to be Christians. And what contradictions there are in the establishing of their crime! According to the rescript of Trajan, Christians should not be sought out, but if they are brought before the tribunal, they must be punished:

What a strange sentence, illogical of necessity! As innocent people they must not be sought out; as criminals, they must be punished. They are spared, and they are cruelly treated: people shut their eyes, and punish them. . . . If you condemn them, why do you not seek them

<sup>25</sup> A very careful comparison of these two works has been made by Monceaux, *op. cit.*, pp. 211-219.

<sup>26</sup> I, 11-12.

out? If you do not seek them out, why do you not acquit them? For the seeking out of brigands there are in each province a detachment of soldiers chosen by lot: against those guilty of *lèse majesté* and public enemies, every man is a soldier, and the search extends to accomplices and to confidants. In the case of the Christian alone it is not lawful to seek him out, but it is lawful to bring him before the judge, as if the search had some purpose other than to bring him before the judge! You thus condemn a man who has been denounced, whereas no one has ordered that he should be sought for! I would say that if he deserves punishment, it is not because he is guilty, but because he has allowed himself to be captured, while all the time he ought not to have been sought for (II, 8-9).

This is not the only anomaly in this criminal procedure:

When those others who are accused deny their guilt, you apply torture to make them confess; only to Christians do you apply it to make them deny. . . . A man cries "I am a Christian." He says what he is, and you wish to hear him say what he is not. You, who preside to arrive at the truth, make every effort to hear from us a lie. "You ask me," says the accused, "if I am a Christian: I am. Why do you torture me contrary to the rules of justice? I confess, and you torture me. What would you do were I to deny? When the others deny, you do not easily believe them, but if we deny, you believe us at once" (II, 10-13).

This pressing argument is yet only a beginning: Tertullian goes on to demonstrate positively the innocence of Christians. They are charged with clandestine crimes: no enquiry has ever confirmed these infamous calumnies, which are so unlikely that they collapse of themselves. If the pagans believe them, is it not because they are conscious of similar crimes: the human sacrifices offered by the Carthaginians to Saturn, by the Gauls to Mercury, and by the Romans to Jupiter? It is among the pagans that infanticide, abortion, and incest are found: among Christians, morals are pure, and there are some among them who keep a virginal continence; there are among them aged men who are as pure as children, "*senes pueri*" (ii, 6-9).

### *The Accusation of Atheism*

Having dealt with these calumnies, the apologist passes on to complaints of a religious nature (x-xxvii): "You say that we do

not honour the gods, and do not offer sacrifices for the emperors." This accusation of atheism, so popular and so dangerous, had been refuted over and over again; Tertullian gives to his pleading his own personal mark by the vehemence with which he attacks polytheism and idolatry, by his appeal to the spontaneous witness of the human soul, "O testimonium animae naturaliter christianae" (xvii, 6), and lastly by the care he takes to set forth Christian doctrine, and especially the theology of the Word, and the Incarnation (xxi). These outlines are repeated and completed in his treatises on the *Testimony of the Soul* and *Adversus Praxean*.<sup>27</sup>

### *The Accusation of lèse-majesté*

After the crime of atheism, there remained a final complaint, the most dangerous of all in the eyes of the Roman magistrates, that of *lèse-majesté* (xxviii-xlv). Tertullian's discussion of this point is particularly interesting, and displays his best qualities, and also his most dangerous exaggerations. He paints for us a portrait of a Christian praying for the Emperor, "with eyes uplifted, and hands stretched out, for they are pure, his head uncovered, because we have no cause to be ashamed, and with no need for anyone to tell us what to say, for we pray from the heart. . . . While we are thus praying with hands lifted up towards God, let iron nails tear us asunder! . . . The very attitude of the Christian who prays shows him to be ready for all tortures. Go on, most excellent governors, and seize a soul which is praying to God for the Emperor! The crime will be there, where is the true God and his worship!" (xxx, 4-7).

These prayers are prescribed for us by the Scriptures: we pray even for our persecutors (xxxi); we pray for the Empire (xxxii); we see in the Emperor, not a god, but one chosen by God; and since it is our God who has chosen him, he belongs to us more than to anyone else (xxxiii). "Augustus, the founder of the Empire, did not even desire to be called 'Lord.' For that is one of the names of God. In truth I will give the emperor the name of 'Lord,' but in its ordinary sense (*more communi*), and provided I am not compelled to give it to him in the sense in which I attribute it to God. For the rest, I am free in respect to him; I have only one Lord, the

<sup>27</sup> Cf. *infra*, pp. 822 and 831.

almighty and eternal God, who is also the Lord of the Emperor himself.”<sup>28</sup>

These words are an authentic expression of the Christian faith, loyally subject to the Emperor, but reserving adoration for God alone. But Tertullian, who so well understands and defends the traditional attitude of the Church, betrays it in other passages by his exaggerations and provocations:

If we wished to act, not as secret avengers, but as declared enemies, would we not have the force of numbers? . . . We are of yesterday, and already we have filled the earth and all that belongs to you: the cities and their quarters,<sup>29</sup> the fortified posts, the municipalities, the villages, even the camps, the tribes, the decuries, the palace, the senate, the forum: we have left you only the temples. We can number your armies: the Christians of one single province are greater in number. . . . We would have been able, even without arms and without revolting but merely by separating from you, to combat you. For if, forming so great a multitude of men, we had broken with you and gone to establish ourselves in some quiet corner of the earth, the loss of so many citizens of so many kinds would assuredly have covered with shame the rulers of the world; indeed, this withdrawal would have sufficed in itself to punish them (xxxvii, 4-6).

A little further on, the apologist claims that Christians could not be seditious, and for this reason: “No affairs are so foreign to us as public affairs. We know only one republic, common to all, namely the world” (xxxviii, 3). And again: “Our only interest in this world is to get out of it as soon as possible” (xli, 5).

In the following chapter, Tertullian changes his tone: “We remember that we owe thanks to God . . . there is not one fruit of his works that we reject. . . . We dwell in this world with you; with you again we sail the seas; with you we serve as soldiers, work on the land, and carry on commerce; with you we exchange the products of our arts and of our labours. How can we seem unnecessary for your affairs, seeing that we live with you and among you? I do not understand it” (xlii, 2-3).

These are very wise protestations, but they are not sufficient to correct the acrimony of the declarations which have preceded.

<sup>28</sup> This text is one of those that best show the danger created for Christians by the imperial cultus, and the care with which these affirmed their civic loyalty while vindicating their religious independence. Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. I, p. 30 and n. 1.

<sup>29</sup> *Urbes, insulas*. It seems wrong to translate *insulas* as “isles,” as is often done.

After a last discussion concerning certain points of Christian doctrine and their relation to the teaching of philosophers,<sup>30</sup> Tertullian closes with a resounding peroration:

Your most refined cruelties are of no use; rather they constitute an attraction for our religion. We increase our numbers when you harvest us, for the blood of Christians is a seed. . . . This very obstinacy with which you reproach us is a lesson. For who, seeing this spectacle, does not feel himself shaken, or does not try to find out what is behind all this? Who has sought this, without becoming one of us? Who has joined us, without aspiring to suffer in order to purchase the plenitude of the grace of God, and to obtain from Him complete forgiveness at the price of his blood? For there is no fault for which the martyr does not obtain pardon. And that is why we render you thanks immediately for your sentences. And thus divine things differ from human ones: when you condemn us, God absolves us.

### *Value of the Apologeticum*

Such is this work, the most eloquent and effective of all that Tertullian wrote. No voice so powerful as his had as yet made itself heard in favour of the persecuted Christians. Those who for so long had been suffering and dying in silence, must have heard his plea with great joy. Doubtless other apologists had preceded Tertullian at Rome and in the East,<sup>31</sup> but their *Apologetics* were written in Greek, and in far-off churches, and though written with touching sincerity, they had not the force of the *Apologeticum*. The personal mark of Tertullian appeared above all in his vigorous appeal in the name of legality and of natural equity, and in the name of Christian virtue which is fecundated when it is destroyed. His vigour was unfortunately accompanied by exaggerations, which are found especially in the third part (xxviii-xxlv). In refuting the ac-

<sup>30</sup> Philosophy is discredited by the personal unworthiness of philosophers (xlvi, 10-18); the best of its contents is derived from the Bible (xlvii, 1-4). Ch. xlviii is devoted to the resurrection of the body and to the eternal fire of hell. As an advocate wishing to push his point to the extreme end, Tertullian adds: "Even supposing that our teaching were false and should be regarded only as a prejudice, it is at least necessary; it may be foolish, but it is useful; those who accept it are obliged to become better, through the fear of eternal torment, and the hope of eternal happiness" (xlix, 2). We see once more in this work the mark of a man who has more zeal than judgment.

<sup>31</sup> Many of the chapters of the *Apologeticum* display the traditional themes of the Greek apologetic of the second century: the temporary character of the Greek religion (xi), the folly of idolatry (*ibid.*); the late date of the philosophers

cusations of *lèse-majesté*, Tertullian successively adopts two positions which it is difficult to reconcile: sometimes he exalts the submission of Christians, who pray for the Emperor and serve him; at other times he utters threats, in which we see not so much the spirit of Christianity as the violent character of the author: "our withdrawal would be your ruin"; "the republic is foreign to us"; "we are citizens of the world"; "our only interest is to depart from it." All this was dangerous for the safety of Christians, and compromised the loyalty of their attitude. We see in these exaggerations the germ of the Montanist morality which fifteen years later will be opposed by Tertullian himself to the authentic Christian morality.<sup>32</sup>

It is not only by this feature that the *Apologeticum* forms a first outline of the picture Tertullian will paint later on. In some lines in ch. xlvii, 10, he already sketches out the argument from prescription;<sup>33</sup> the theology of the Word and of the Incarnation appear in ch. xxi, 10-14, as it will be developed in the *Adversus Praxean*; the theatre is condemned (xxviii, 4) as it will be in the *De spectaculis*. And above all, the apologetic arguments which are later on set forth in full light are already presented in this first work in a briefer form.<sup>34</sup> These comparisons are instructive: they show that Tertullian was a tenacious man who appeared at the beginning of his Christian life as he would always remain, although the extreme requirements of his moral system were at that date tempered by the wisdom of the Church, from whom he was to separate himself ten years later.

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compared to the prophets whom they had plagiarised (xix and xlvii); the identification of the pagan gods with demons (xxii, xxiii). In this book, as in those which follow, Tertullian often borrows from his predecessors, but he impresses his own mark even on what he takes from them.

<sup>32</sup> These exaggerations have been stressed by M. Guignebert in his work, *Tertullien, étude sur ses sentiments à l'égard de l'empire et de la société civile*, Paris, 1901. He regards them as a manifestation of authentic Christianity which, already in Tertullian's day, was being betrayed by the Church. He writes thus at the end of his book (p. 593): "With him (Tertullian) disappears one of the last upholders of the wonderful and unattainable ideal of the very first Christians, and his work represents one of the most vigorous attempts ever made to maintain it, even against his fellow men, against life, and if need be, against the Church." This important matter has been discussed with greater precision and fairness by Lortz, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 303-324.

<sup>33</sup> "We oppose a bar (*praescribimus*) to these falsifiers of our doctrine, and we say to them that the only rule of truth is none other than that which comes from Christ, transmitted by his own companions, and it is easy to prove that these innovators are much later than they."

<sup>34</sup> On these comparisons, cf. P. de Labriolle, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

## *The Testimony of the Soul*

We cannot hope to examine here all the writings of this brilliant and fiery apologist, but we must at least mention summarily a few of his favourite ideas. First we must mention his *Testimony of the Naturally Christian Soul*. In his selected passages from Tertullian, Turmel enthusiastically praised this little work: "The school of Immanence has in the whole of ecclesiastical literature only one patron, Tertullian."<sup>35</sup> At the opposite extreme, Guignebert thinks that it is "one of the weakest works of Tertullian . . . ; consisting entirely of the sophistical study of conventional expressions in current language."<sup>36</sup> But the treatise itself does not justify either such enthusiasm or such severity. It is not very original, and shows obvious Stoic influences;<sup>37</sup> it is of interest inasmuch as it shows us Tertullian's preferences: "many apologists before his time derived arguments from the works of philosophers: the argument is unsatisfactory; it is better to appeal to the witness of a soul not yet Christian, foreign to all culture." It is only too certain that Tertullian attributed to this testimony more importance than it deserves, but he was right in appealing to the passionate cries which at certain times rise from the depths of the soul and reveal religious aspirations which God himself has impressed upon it.<sup>38</sup>

## *The Ad Scapulam*

In the *Ad Scapulam*, we find once more some of the ideas of the *Apologeticum*, set forth in a more imperious tone. Tertullian first of all maintains that a man's religion concerns only himself, and that no one ought to impose by force a cult, which should always remain free.<sup>39</sup> He warns the proconsul, whom he directly addresses,

<sup>35</sup> *Tertullien* (collection *La Pensée chrétienne*, 1905, p. 39).

<sup>36</sup> *Tertullien*, p. 252, n. 6.

<sup>37</sup> Marcus Aurelius similarly bases an argument on the formulæ of current language: "The earth loves rain, the venerable Ether also loves . . . The world also loves to do that which is destined to happen. I say therefore to the world: 'I embrace thy love!' Do we not say similarly of a thing that 'it loves to happen thus?'" (*Thoughts*, X, 19. Cf. v, 8, 1-3).

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Lortz, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 233-245.

<sup>39</sup> *Ad Scapulam*, ii: "Humani juris et naturalis potestatis est unicuique, quod putaverit, colere, nec alii obest aut prodest alterius religio. Sed nec religionis est cogere religionem, quae sponte suscipi debeat, non vi, cum et hostiae ab animo libenti expostulentur." Pamel, in a note on this passage, warns the reader not to

of the responsibility he is incurring, and the punishments to which he is exposing himself; Vigellius Saturninus, who began the bloody persecutions, lost his sight; Claudius Lucius Herminianus, who, in order to avenge the conversion of his wife, had treated Christians with great cruelty, was tormented by an illness when alone in his palace and cried out: "Let no one know this, for the Christians would rejoice at it." Caecilius Capella, when on the point of dying at Byzantium, exclaimed in his turn, "Christians, rejoice." Scapula himself has felt the head of God: let him remember that! We have here the theme which will be developed still further by Lactantius, in his *De mortibus persecutorum*. Then, repeating with greater stress one of the arguments of the *Apologeticum*, Tertullian shows the proconsul what would be involved by a proscription of all the Christians in Carthage:

What will you do with so many thousands of people, so many men and women, of all ages and ranks, who will offer themselves to you? How many scaffolds and swords you will require! And what will Carthage itself suffer? You will have to decimate it. Among the condemned, each will be able to recognise his neighbours and his comrades; they will see there perhaps men and women of your own rank, some of the highest personages, relations or friends of your friends. Spare then yourself, if not us; spare Carthage, if not yourself; spare your province, for since your intention has become known, it has been a prey to disturbances from the soldiers and to private hatreds. Our only master is God. He passes before you, and cannot be hidden, and you can do nothing against Him. Those whom you regard as your masters are but men, who will die some day. You will not destroy our sect; know well that when you think you are killing it you are strengthening it. At the sight of such great courage, people are troubled, they ardently wish to find out what is the matter, and when they realise the truth they become ours (v).

Did this eloquence intimidate the persecutors? We do not know. At least it must without doubt have moved more than one already hesitating pagan. Above all it made Christians more conscious of

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infer that Tertullian authorises "freedom of the sects," and refers to the *Scorpiace*. Certainly, in the *Scorpiace* ii, Tertullian writes: "Ad officium haereticos compelli, non illici dignum est"; but as the context shows, the constraint mentioned there, and recommended against the heretics, is only the logical compulsion of arguments, and not physical constraint by acts.



their power; and in spite of the defection of the apologist the Church remained grateful to him for having so proudly defended it.

### *The Controversialist*

Tertullian was always a fighter. The study of his apologetical works has revealed him to us grappling with the pagans. His theological writings are also polemical works, but his opponents here are no longer pagans, but heretics: Marcion, Praxeas, the Valentinians, and the various Gnostics. This feature of the theological works of Tertullian distinguishes them clearly from the Alexandrian works, those of Clement and of Origen. The masters of the Catechetical School were preoccupied with the refutation of error, but still more with the contemplation of the truth; their works were not weapons for combat, but instruments of research. Tertullian, on the contrary, affirmed to begin with that there is nothing to search for: the Church possesses the truth, and hence its whole effort is to defend it. Sometimes he modifies this too absolute principle, but we never find in him the hesitations of Origen or even the ardent prayers of Augustine, who besought God to give him, with a purer soul, a more penetrating vision.

For the purpose of this controversy, Tertullian takes his material wherever he finds it. The book *Contra Valentinianos* depends entirely on Irenæus; the treatise *De praescriptione* is much more carefully worked out, but here also the borrowing is evident. Nevertheless, in the controversial works, or at least in the best of them, we find once more what we have admired in his apologetical writings, that personal stamp which gives to an already traditional argument the relief and brilliance of an original thought.

Of all these theological works, the most important are the treatise *De praescriptione*, the five books *Adversus Marcionem*, and the book *Adversus Praxean*. The *Adversus Marcionem* is a very vigorous work of controversy, and the most individual one which Tertullian wrote, but it is above all polemical, and the theology of the author is set forth there less plainly than in the treatise *De praescriptione* and the *Adversus Praxean*. We accordingly prefer to deal with these two latter works.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>40</sup> On the books against Marcion, cf. *supra*, pp. 641-653. This short expression may be completed by A. D'Alès, *Théologie de Tertullien*, pp. 50-60, 162-185, 245-247; Harnack, *Marcion*, 1924, pp. 328-332.

### *The De praescriptione*

The treatise *De praescriptione contra haereticos*<sup>41</sup> is, with the *Apologeticum*, the work which has had the most brilliant and lasting fame.<sup>42</sup> The idea of Tradition developed in it is as old as Christianity, and Irenæus had used it powerfully against heretics. Tertullian gives it a juridical form. "By joining theology to jurisprudence, he conferred upon the one all the prestige which the other already exercised over men's minds. In the name of the codes, all teaching which would run counter to the official *Credo* of the Churches is self-condemned, and does not deserve to be listened to."<sup>43</sup>

This effort was called for by the diffusion of heresy. Many Christians had fallen, and this had been a scandal for others. Tertullian, who had become a priest shortly before,<sup>44</sup> realised the alarm of those around him, and wished to pacify them. His priestly anxiety gives his work its character: it is not a scholastic discussion, but the effort of a priest who wishes to regain control of troubled minds and give them peace once more:

If a bishop, a deacon, a widow, a virgin, a doctor, or even a martyr were to depart from the rule, would that make heresy truth? Do we judge the faith according to persons, or persons according to the faith? No one is wise, or faithful, or great, if he be not a Christian; but no one is a Christian if he does not persevere until the end.<sup>45</sup>

### *Christianity and Philosophy*

But how has heresy arisen, and where has it found its weapons? From philosophy, replies the polemist; Valentine derived his specu-

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Labriolle's edition; D'Alès, *op. cit.*, pp. 201-212; Monceaux, *op. cit.*, pp. 305-311.

<sup>42</sup> On the history of the argument from prescription after Tertullian's time, cf. P. de Labriolle in *Revue d'histoire et de littérature religieuse*, Vol. XI, 1908, pp. 408-428 and 497-514.

<sup>43</sup> De Labriolle, *op. cit.*, *Introd.*, p. xxv. As Batiffol points out (*L'Eglise naissante*, pp. 326 *et seq.*), the prescription invoked by Tertullian is not to be understood in the restricted sense of the "praescriptio longi temporis." This prescription by possession is mentioned for the first time in a rescript of December 29th, 199: "It is unlikely that Tertullian should have transferred to the domain of theology an expedient in procedure which was so new and so comparatively rare in the year 200. Tertullian seems rather to have taken the juridical term *praescriptio* in its earliest sense, meaning thereby a preliminary argument before the main pleading, an argument which in his opinion made such pleading unnecessary."

<sup>44</sup> This work belongs to the years between 200 and 206, i.e. the first years of Tertullian's priestly life.

<sup>45</sup> *De praescriptione*, iii, 5-6.

lations concerning the Aeons from Plato; Marcion took from the Stoics his useless god; from the Epicureans has been borrowed the denial of the immortality of the soul, and from all the philosophers the denial of the resurrection of the flesh. And whence comes this dialectic, which is able equally to build and to destroy, if not from the "miserable Aristotle"? (vii, 1-6). In this passionate accusation we see already the whole theme which will be taken up again twenty years later by Hippolytus in his *Philosophumena*. Here once again we find these two equally intransigent doctrinaires allied. Doubtless their temperaments explain in part their severity, but even so it must not be forgotten that the half century which had passed since the *Apologies* of Justin had witnessed the rise of the intemperate speculations of the Gnostics and the captious syllogisms of the Adoptianists.<sup>46</sup>

Faced with all these philosophical pretensions, so menacing for the Faith, Tertullian repeats the warning words of St. Paul: "He writes to the Colossians: 'See that no man deceives you by philosophy.' For he had been at Athens." And the impetuous controversialist continues:

What is there in common between Athens and Jerusalem, between the Academy and the Church, between heretics and Christians? Our doctrine comes from the Porch of Solomon, who himself taught that we must seek God in complete simplicity of heart. So much the worse for those who have set forth a Stoic, a Platonist or a Dialectic Christianity. For ourselves, we have no need of curiosity after Jesus Christ, nor of research after the Gospel. Once we believe, we have no need to believe anything further. For the first article of our faith is that there is nothing beyond it which we are to believe (vii, 9-13).

### *The Rule of Faith*

This condemnation of all enquiry is manifestly too severe to be accepted without modification. Tertullian himself realises this, and after many hesitations and restatements, he somewhat regretfully concludes: "Seek then from us and amongst ourselves and concerning the things which are ours, and only what can be called in question without affecting the rule of faith" (xii, 5). And straightway Tertullian formulates this rule of faith:

This rule of faith . . . consists in believing this: there is absolutely one God, who is none other than the Creator of the world; it is He who

<sup>46</sup> Cf. *supra*, pp. 725 *et seq.*

by his Word, emitted before all things, drew the universe from nothing; this Word has been called his Son. In the name of God He appeared under various forms to the patriarchs, made himself heard at all times in the prophets, and lastly descended by the spirit and power of God the Father into the Virgin Mary, became flesh in her womb, and being born of her became the person of Jesus Christ. Then He preached a new law and the new promise of the kingdom of heaven, He performed miracles, was crucified, and rose again the third day; being raised to the heavens He sat at the right hand of the Father; He sent in his place the power of the Holy Spirit to guide believers; He will come in glory to take the saints and give them the joy of eternal life and the heavenly promises, and to condemn the wicked to eternal fire, after the resurrection of all and the re-establishment of the flesh.<sup>47</sup>

### *Prescription*

After thus setting forth the rule of faith, Tertullian adds: "Such is the rule which Christ instituted . . . and which cannot give rise amongst us to questions other than those raised by heresies and asked by heretics" (xiii, 6). If this rule is observed one may enquire, but even so, faith is much better than curiosity: "Let curiosity give place to faith, let glory give place to salvation! . . . To know nothing against the rule is to know all" (xiv, 5). If heretics are always seeking, it is because they have found nothing.

But, it will be urged, heretics argue from Scripture. This objection leads on to the fundamental question:

This brings us to our main object: it is towards this point that we have been tending, and all that has been said was only a preface in order to prepare the ground for what we have to say. Let us now come to grips on the very ground chosen by our opponents. They bring forward the Scriptures. . . . Hence it is here above all that we block their path, by declaring them incapable of disputing on the Scriptures (xv, 1-3).

This is not timidity, but wisdom: Christ sent the apostles, and these founded churches.

<sup>47</sup> For the Creed in Tertullian, this text must be compared with *De praescriptione*, xxxvi; *De virginibus velandis* i; *Adversus Praxean*, ii and xxx. Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 166-168; D'Alès, *Théologie de Tertullien*, pp. 256-258; Dom Capelle, *Le Symbole romain au deuxième siècle*, in *Revue bénédictine*, 1927, pp. 37-39. None of these texts gives a literal transcription of the Creed. A comparison is enough to show this, but this also enables us to separate out the traditional formula from glosses and comments. It is in the *De virginibus velandis*, 1, that the formula is the most free from glosses.

From these facts I derive this prescription. Once Jesus Christ our God had sent the apostles to preach, we may not receive any other preachers than those Christ has instituted. . . . But what was the subject of their preaching? . . . Here again I raise this prescription that, in order to find this out, we must necessarily address ourselves to these same churches which the apostles founded in person. . . . In these conditions it is clear that every doctrine which is in agreement with that of these churches, the matrices and sources of the faith, should be regarded as true, for it evidently contains what the churches received from the apostles, the apostles from Christ, and Christ from God. . . . We communicate with the apostolic churches, because our doctrine in no wise differs from theirs, and that is the sign of truth (xxi, 1-7).

The proof is so plain that once it is set forth it admits of no answer. It is in vain that, in order to reply to it, the heretics pretend either that the apostles did not know all things, or that they did not reveal to all the whole of what they knew, or again, that the churches have not received or kept faithfully the doctrine transmitted to them. For even if one were to grant these unlikely suppositions, heretics would still have to explain the agreement of the various churches in the same faith: "that which is found identically in a great number comes not from error but from tradition" (xxviii, 3). Like unity, antiquity is also a guarantee of truth: "how could there have been Christians before Christ was known, or heresies before the true doctrine?" (xxix, 4).

Where then was Marcion, the pilot of Pontus, so zealous for Stoicism? Where was Valentine, the disciple of Platonism? . . . If any of the heresies dare to trace themselves back to the apostolic age in order to seem to have been bequeathed by the apostles, pretending to have existed in the time of the apostles, we have a right to say to them: "Show us the origin of your churches; enumerate the succession of your bishops from the beginning, in such a way that the first bishop had as guarantor and predecessor one of the apostles, or one of the apostolic men who remained until the end in communion with the apostles." For that is the way in which the apostolic churches set forth their history. For instance, the church of Smyrna relates that Polycarp was installed by John; the church of Rome shows that Clement was ordained by Peter. And in general, the other churches similarly exhibit the names of those who were established by the apostles in the episcopate and are thus derived from the apostolic seed (xxx, xxxii).

There were already heresies in the apostolic times, grosser than those of to-day, but doctrinally these are connected together, and

the condemnation of the former affects also the latter. Our doctrine, on the other hand, is that which the apostles held. Is a proof desired? Interrogate the apostolic churches:

Are you near to Achaia? You have Corinth. Are you not far from Macedonia? You have Philippi, and Thessalonica. If you go to the Asiatic coast, you have Ephesus. If you are on the confines of Italy, you have Rome, whose authority is also our own support. Happy church, in which the apostles poured out all their doctrine together with their blood! Peter there suffered a death similar to that of the Lord. Paul was there crowned with a death like that of John (the Baptist). The apostle John was plunged there into boiling oil, but came out unharmed, and was sent away into an island. Let us see what this church has learnt, what she teaches, and what she certifies, as well as the African churches (xxxvi, 2-4).

Once more Tertullian recalls here the baptismal creed, which he sets forth very briefly, and then adds: "The Church marks this faith with water, she clothes it with the Holy Spirit, she feeds it with the Eucharist, she exhorts to martyrdom, and receives no one in opposition to this teaching."

Hence heretics have no right to our good things:

As they are not Christians, they have no right to the Christian books, and we may justly say to them: "Who are you? When and whence did you come? What are you doing with my things, seeing that you do not belong to me? By what right, O Marcion, are you cutting down wood in my forest? What right have you, Valentine, to change the course of my streams? Who authorises you, O Apelles, to remove my landmarks? This domain belongs to me, I have long possessed it, it was mine before your time. I have authentic documents, emanating from the owners themselves to whom the property belonged. I myself am the heir of the apostles" (xxxvii, 3-4).

The book concludes with a pressing exhortation: "These men have perverse minds; this struggle, which we must face up to, is necessary for the faith, in order to manifest the elect and reveal the reprobate" (xxxix, 1).<sup>48</sup> These men have talent and ease, without doubt, but the same qualities are to be found in those who

<sup>48</sup> "Cum quibus luctatio est nobis, fratres, merito contemplanda, fidei necessaria . . ." P. de Labriolle translates "merito contemplanda" as "which we must therefore study." But that is inexact. Origen and Dionysius of Alexandria thought that the study of heretics was useful, but Tertullian never thought so, and the text has not that meaning.

plagiarise Virgil or Homer. Such perversions come from the devil, like the idolatrous imitations of the Christian mysteries which are found in the cult of Mithra, or in the superstitions of Numa Pompilius. The discipline of the heretical churches similarly bears witness to their vanity; they have no authority, they do not know how to distinguish catechumens from the faithful, and ordinations take place in a haphazard way: "To-day they have one bishop, to-morrow another. To-day such a one is deacon, who will to-morrow be a lector; to-day such a one is a priest, who will to-morrow be a layman; they entrust priestly functions to laymen" (xli, 8). They take no pains to convert the pagans, but only to pervert Catholics. They are unable to edify, and seek only to ruin. The imagination which created their doctrine dissolves and transforms it unceasingly; "most of them have no church; without mother, or dwelling, and without faith and exiled, they wander like vagabonds and outlaws" (xlii, 4). And finally, in a picture painted with bitter and terrible irony, he describes the judgment of Christ, and heretics pleading that neither Jesus nor the apostles had sufficiently taught or warned them, and then, in presence of the dumbfounded just, the Lord himself having to admit that He had deceived them. "There," cries Tertullian, "you have what may be imagined by those who are misled and who do not keep themselves from the danger which threatens the truth of the faith" (xliv, 12).

### *Importance of the Work. Tradition*

Such is the *De praescriptione*, which, together with the *Apologeticum*, is the most vigorous and durable of all Tertullian's works. We recognise at a glance the theses dear to St. Irenæus concerning tradition, and in particular, concerning the decisive value of the witness of the apostolic churches; but these theses are here set forth and defended with a brilliance which gives them a new force; the juridical form of the argument enhances its rigour, and the mordant style makes it even more penetrating. If however we pay more attention to the ideas, we find that they are less rich, less balanced, and sometimes less exact than in Irenæus. There is a certain exaggeration in the condemnation of philosophy and of all enquiry;<sup>49</sup> the argument from the episcopal lists referred to in ch. xxxii is less developed than in Irenæus, and the fundamental office of the

<sup>49</sup> Chs. vii and xiv in spite of the incidental reservation in ch. xii, 5.

Roman Church (xxxvi, 3) is less strongly marked. Again, in this study of tradition, we do not see so clearly the inmost aspect of this life which is transmitted by the Spirit of God and fecundates and renews the Church continually.<sup>50</sup> This omission is a serious one: tradition certainly founds a right, but above all it transmits a life; of these two elements of the proof, so strongly set forth by Irenæus, Tertullian retains only the former.

What makes the reader indulgent towards these lacunæ and these exaggerations, and wins sympathy for the author, is the priestly concern which is so plain. The book is certainly a controversial work written by a theologian in order to defend doctrine against its opponents, but it is still more the work of a priest who is anxious to defend his flock from the scandal and contagion of heresy.

### *The Theology of the Trinity*

The treatise *Adversus Praxean*<sup>51</sup> resembles the *De præscriptione* in certain respects. We find the same anxiety to combat heretics, the same vigour in attack, the same richness and brilliance of style, but the formulæ of Trinitarian theology have here so striking a relief and are sometimes so happily expressed that they appear as definitive at the threshold of Latin theology, so that the Council of Nicaea will only have to confirm them. But if we consider, not isolated formulæ, but the treatise as a whole, we are obliged to regard it as a very imperfect work, and one which cannot be compared either with the *Apologeticum* or with the *De præscriptione*.

A first remark is suggested by the date of the book: it was composed after 213, when Tertullian was already involved in the Montanist heresy. We perceive this already in the first chapter: Tertullian criticises Praxeas not only because of his Trinitarian heresy, but also because of his opposition to the Phrygian prophets. He asserts that by his false testimony Praxeas forced the Bishop of Rome to condemn the prophecies which until then he had approved. "Thus Praxeas performed at Rome two diabolical works: he expelled prophecy, and implanted heresy; he put to flight the Paraclete, and crucified the Father."<sup>52</sup> We must not forget, when

<sup>50</sup> The action of the Holy Spirit is incidentally indicated in ch. xxviii, 1.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. ed. Kroymann, in the *Vienna Corpus*, Vol. XLVII, 1906, and in the collection of Krüger, 1907. Theological study by A. D'Alès, *Tertullien*, pp. 67-103.

<sup>52</sup> Later on (xxx) we notice Tertullian's recognition of the "new prophecy."



reading this book, that its author had abandoned the Church and had given credence to revelations which she condemned. But the errors found in the work do not render its study profitless. Tertullian, even as a Montanist, remained attached to the Trinitarian dogma; his exposition and defence of it often put us in touch with an authentic tradition set forth in vigorous, firm and clear terms.

We may thus summarise this doctrine: there is only one God and one Lord, and yet there are three, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, each of whom is God and Lord. This unity is compatible with this trinity, for between these three there is a unity of origin and unity of substance.<sup>53</sup> The Son "is of the substance of the Father":<sup>54</sup> this is the very formula of Nicaea. The Spirit is "of the Father by the Son,"<sup>55</sup> a formula which will also be consecrated by tradition, and especially by the Greek fathers.<sup>56</sup>

These relations of origin do not imply any separation. Some abuse the Gospel text: "I came forth from the Father and am come into the world" (*John* viii, 49), and separate the Son from the Father. They are wrong: if the Son came forth from the Father it was as a ray from the sun, as a stream from a spring, as a plant from the seed.<sup>57</sup> The same comparisons applied to the Holy Spirit show that He also participates in this unity, and thus we are brought back to the formula rightly dear to Tertullian: "I always affirm that there is one substance in three (subjects) united together."<sup>58</sup> Already these three receive in Tertullian the name of "Persons" which theology will consecrate.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Ch. ii: "Above all we must say again that the unity of God is not in question, for it is agreed that there is one only divine substance in three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit:—three Persons not in condition but in rank, not in substance but in force; not in power but in aspect; one substance, one condition, one power, for there is but one only God communicating himself in diversity of degree, form and aspect under the names of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit."

<sup>54</sup> Ch. iv: "Filius non aliunde deduco, sed de substantia Patris."

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*: "Spiritus non aliunde deduco quam a Patre per Filium."

<sup>56</sup> Cf. T. de Regnon, *Etudes de Théologie positive*, Vol. IV, 1898, pp. 80-88.

<sup>57</sup> Ch. xxii. These comparisons were already traditional. Cf. Justin, *Dial.*, lxi, cxxviii; Tatian, *Adversus Graecos*, v; Hippolytus, *Adversus Noetum*, xi. They will remain traditional, and the Nicene Fathers will repeat: "lumen de lumine."

<sup>58</sup> Ch. xii: "Ubique teneo unam substantiam in tribus cohaerentibus."

<sup>59</sup> Ch. vii. Arguing against the Modalists, Tertullian writes: "You will not agree that the Word has the character of a substance, lest it might appear as to be a kind of reality and person" (ne ut res et persona quaedam videri possit). And a little lower down: "Whatever the substance of the Word may be, I call Him a Person and I claim for Him the name of Son" (quaecumque ergo sub-

We could wish to stop there. But unfortunately Tertullian's theology contains other theses, which are much less satisfactory. We know what a profound mistrust St. Irenæus felt in respect of human analogies, by which some theologians thought to explain the divine generation.<sup>60</sup> Tertullian was less reserved; he thought he could scrutinise the secrets of the divine life "before the creation of the world down to the generation of the Word" (v). This language gives rise to anxieties which the rest of the chapter only confirms: the divine generation appears there as developing progressively: in man, reason (*ratio*) is regarded as at first inert; under the effort of reflection, the word (*sermo*) is evolved. God, who conceived the world by his Word, sends forth this Word externally and creates the world;<sup>61</sup> it is only then that Tertullian regards the generation of the Word as perfect and the Word itself as truly the Son of God.<sup>62</sup> Accordingly we are not surprised to read elsewhere: <sup>63</sup> "There was a time when there existed neither fault nor the Son, and when in consequence the Lord was neither Judge nor Father." <sup>64</sup>

In this same ch. vii in which we find this dangerous theology we

stantia Sermonis fuit, illam dico personam et illi nomen filii vindico). Cf. xii: "Alium quomodo accipere debeas, jam professus sum, personae, non substantiae nomine." This term is borrowed from juridical language. Cf. D'Alès, *op. cit.*, pp. 82 *et seq.*

<sup>60</sup> *Adversus haereses*, II, xiii, 8 and II, xxviii, 4-6. Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 551-553.

<sup>61</sup> Ch. vi-vii: "When God willed to create the beings whom He had conceived in Himself by reason and the word of his wisdom, in their substances and forms, He first of all uttered the Word, which contained in itself its two inseparable companions reason and wisdom, so that all things were made by Him who had projected and conceived all things. . . ." Ch. vii: "Hence it was then that the Word itself received its form and its completion, sound and voice, when God said: 'Let there be light.' This is the perfect birth of the Word, when it proceeds from God. It is first of all produced for thought, under the name of Wisdom: 'The Lord has made me as a beginning of his ways.' Then He is generated for action: 'When He made the heavens, I was near him.' Consequently, making the one of whom He is the Son to be his Father by his procession, He became the first-born, as generated before all, and only Son, as solely generated by God."

<sup>62</sup> Cf. ch. xii. Explaining the divine word, "Let us make man" at the time of the creation of man, Tertullian says: "It was then that He had near Him a second person, his Word, and a third, the Spirit in the Word." And a little lower: "When the Son had not yet appeared, God said: 'Let there be light, and there was light,' that is, the Word himself, the true light which enlighteneth every man coming into this world."

<sup>63</sup> *Adversus Hermogenem*, iii.

<sup>64</sup> On this conception of the procession and generation of the Word of God in Tertullian, cf. D'Alès, *op. cit.*, pp. 84-96.

also come up against the materialistic conceptions from which Tertullian was never able to free himself. In order to prove that the Word is a substance, he asserts that He is a body, for God is a body: "Who will deny that God is a body, although He is a spirit? For a spirit is a body *sui generis*." This affirmation is disconcerting; it shows that Tertullian, so scornful for Greek philosophy, was consciously or unconsciously influenced by the Stoic physics. For the Stoics, only bodies exist, and for them a spirit is by definition a body.<sup>65</sup>

Led astray by these materialistic conceptions, Tertullian represents the divinity as possessed in totality by the Father, but only partially by the Son: "The Father is all the substance, the Son is only a derivation from it and a part, as He himself affirms, saying 'The Father is greater than I.'"<sup>66</sup> In this haze the theology of the Holy Spirit becomes even more confused and muddled than that of the Son.<sup>67</sup>

In the conclusion which terminates the treatise (ch. xxx), Tertullian refers to the "Christian mystery," but also to the "new prophecy"; he thus mentions the two sources he has utilised, the

<sup>65</sup> "For the Stoics, all causes are bodies, since they are spirits" (*Doxographi*, ed. Diels, p. 310). Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. I, p. 88 and n. 3.

<sup>66</sup> Ch. ix. Of course, the words of Jesus in *John* xiv, 28, have a meaning quite different from that given them by Tertullian. We are to rejoice because Jesus returns to his Father, for the Father is greater than He. This comparison applies not to the divine nature, but to Christ's humanity, impatient to ascend to the Father. A little lower (xxxvi) Tertullian, commenting on the account of the Annunciation, interprets, like many other Fathers, "spiritus Dei" of the Word. But he explains it thus: "In saying, not God (but the Spirit of God), he wished us to understand him to be a part of the whole, which was to receive the name of Son." And farther on in this same chapter, he represents Him again as "a portion of the whole." Starting from this erroneous conception, Tertullian explains (ch. xiv) that the Father "is invisible because of the plenitude of his majesty, and the Son is visible because of his derived and limited greatness; just as we cannot contemplate the sun in the totality of its substance which is in the heavens, but our eyes can bear its rays and its tempered and partial clarity which descends as far as the earth."

<sup>67</sup> This confusion is especially obvious in the texts in which Tertullian sets forth the Incarnation of the Son of God (ch. xxvi and xxvii; cf. D'Alès, *op. cit.*, pp. 96-99). D'Alès concludes: "One thing is certain, and that is that the personality of the Holy Spirit appears in the Treatise *Against Praxeas* only in a very confused manner." In other works (*Adversus Marcionem*, iv, 18; *De baptismo*, x), Tertullian explains that "the portion of the Holy Spirit" which was in John the Baptist left him to concentrate in Jesus, "ut in massalem suam summam." Here we have once more a materialistic conception of a Spirit which has parts, and which can concentrate in Jesus only by withdrawing from the Precursor.

authentic Christian tradition attested by the baptismal faith, and the oracles of Montanus. His trinitarian theology bears this double imprint: in certain aspects the Church recognises her own faith, brought out in strong relief; in others she sees only the personal speculations of a mind already astray and which, in seeking the Holy Spirit, had forgotten the great maxim of his master Irenæus: "Where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God."

### *The Moralist*

The moral treatises<sup>68</sup> of Tertullian are numerous. They may be studied from two points of view, either as testimonies concerning the Christian communities of Africa, or as the expression of the mind of the apologist and of its tendencies. The former aspect is very interesting, but would lead to developments which we cannot dwell on here.<sup>69</sup> It is Tertullian himself rather than the Christian society that is the object of our own study.

If we consider his work as a whole, we cannot help admiring the elevation and purity of the ideal he sets forth. The pagan world was very corrupt, and Tertullian himself had experienced its stains, but he found also a stream of living water which purifies all those who bathe therein and leads them on towards the sanctity of God himself. This fact, of which he had found abundant proofs around him, converted him, and he in turn invited thither all Christians. Many of his little moral treatises are but homilies; we find in them the zeal of a priest doing his utmost to lead on his flock towards the perfection set before them in the Gospel.

Among several examples, we will single out the treatise *On Patience*, written by Tertullian when already a priest but not yet led astray by Montanism (between 200 and 206). His first words are a humble admission, which it is pleasant to read:

I confess before the Lord God that it is temerity on my part, and perhaps impudence, to preach patience, of which I myself am quite incapable of giving an example: there is nothing good in me. And yet one who sets out to teach and preach a virtue should begin by putting it into practice, and acquire the right to preach by the authority of his example, if he is not to blush because his actions contradict his words.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. D'Alès, *Tertullien*, pp. 262 *et seq.*; Tixeront, *Tertullien moraliste*, in *Mélanges de Patrologie*, 1921, pp. 117-152.

<sup>69</sup> An accurate and vivid sketch will be found in P. de Labriolle, *op. cit.*, pp. 108 *et seq.*

Tertullian then points out the ideal of patience in God, who never tires of supporting wicked men and doing good to them. Then he finds the same ideal closer to us in Christ, whose life he briefly records, stressing especially the Passion:

I do not speak of his crucifixion, for He came for that end. Could He not have died without suffering outrages? But He willed to die overwhelmed by suffering. They spat upon Him, scourged Him, derided Him, clothed Him in ignoble vestments, and placed on Him a still more ignoble crown. What a wonderful and constant tranquillity of soul! He had willed to hide himself under the aspect of a man, but He did not at all will to imitate human impatience. It was by this trait above all, O Pharisees, you ought to have recognised the Lord, for no mere man could have displayed such patience. All these striking characteristics, which in pagan eyes are so many objections against our faith, but which in fact justify and strengthen it for ourselves, show very clearly to those who have received the grace of faith—show, not by discourses and precepts but by the sufferings undergone by the Lord—that patience is of the nature of God, and is the effect and manifestation of a quality which is proper to Him.

This passage reveals the truly Christian origin of Tertullian's moral teaching: the imitation of God, and the imitation of Christ. At the same time it must be admitted that such pages are rather rare in the works of the controversialist. He rarely invites his disciples to contemplate this ideal, at once so sublime and so peaceful: he hurries on towards a severe and rigid asceticism, the rigour of which is nevertheless fragile because it is human. He takes pleasure in censuring vices and failings, which he pursues with an unrelenting vigour,<sup>70</sup> and in order to correct them he sets before us an ideal

<sup>70</sup> See, for instance, the treatise *De virginibus velandis*, and especially the final chapter, addressed to married women: “. . . The veil should descend as far as the dress; it should fall as low as the hair when it is let down, and should cover the neck. . . . One of our sisters was warned about this by an angel in a dream. . . . But what punishment is deserved by those who, even during the singing of the psalms and when they call upon God, remain uncovered! Or by those who when praying put on their heads a piece of lace or a handkerchief, and think themselves covered,—do they not give the measure of their head? Others have hands larger than any lace or any handkerchief; they act like the ostrich, who thinks herself safe when she covers her head. But the rest of the body is uncovered, and the whole is taken, the head with the rest. So will it be with these women who do not cover themselves as they ought.” This satire is light; others are cruel, as for instance ch. xiv concerning virgins who fall and who very soon have something else to hide besides their head: “merito itaque dum caput non tegunt ut sollicitentur gloriæ causa, ventres tegere coguntur infirmitatis ruina.”

of austere virtue which is more Stoic than Christian, and tries to lead us on less by the attraction of a divine ideal than by the pressure of his invectives. In the pagan world, in which superstition had spread everywhere in public and private life, he overwhelms with his censures all that seems to him to be a compromise or even a toleration. This severity manifested itself from the first years of his Christian life; it is in part explained by the persecution which constantly raged against or at least threatened the Church: "all times, and above all our own, are times of iron and not of gold for Christians."<sup>71</sup> But very soon it was increased through contact with Montanism, and took on a fierce bitterness. Not only were all scenic spectacles forbidden,<sup>72</sup> but all trades which were or might be associated with idolatry. One must not be a maker of idols;<sup>73</sup> that goes without saying. But also one must not be a schoolmaster, for that would involve teaching mythology.<sup>74</sup> One must not be a soldier—for "he who takes the sword shall perish by the sword."<sup>75</sup> One must not be a merchant, for cupidity is idolatry.<sup>76</sup> It would be in vain to protest against these prohibitions, which close all the avenues of life and send Christians out into the desert. Tertullian replies:

It is too late to speak in that manner. It was before baptism that you should have reflected and imitated that prudent architect who, before beginning to build the house, drew up a specification in order to see if he could meet the expenses. Moreover, you have now the words and examples of the Lord, which take away from you all excuse. You say: "I shall be in poverty." The Lord has said: "Blessed are those who are in poverty."—"I shall have nothing to eat."—The Lord says to us: "Do not worry about food," and in the matter of clothing, He has given us the example of the lily.—"I must have money."—"You must sell all things and give to the poor."—"I must think of my children."—"Who-soever putteth his hand to the plough and looketh behind him is a bad workman."—"I was in service."—"No man can serve two masters" (*De idololatria*, xii).

Such reasoning, set forth by an advocate like Tertullian, might close the mouth of an opponent, but it could convince nobody.

<sup>71</sup> *De cultu feminarum*, ii, 13.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. *De spectaculis*.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. *De idololatria*, ch. iii et seq.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, x.

<sup>75</sup> *De corona*, xi.

<sup>76</sup> *De idololatria*, xi.

The same is true of the sophistical argument by which the moralist tries to show that a Christian ought not to flee from persecution: God has willed it, He is wise and good, hence we ought not to withdraw ourselves from it; He is almighty, and so we cannot do so.<sup>77</sup> Any Christian could answer that God often wishes by persecution to chastise us, but not to condemn us to death. Such is the teaching of St. Paul (*II Cor.*, vi, 9), confirmed by the apostle's own life. How often he fled from persecution, at Damascus, Thessalonica, and Ephesus! And great saints like Cyprian and Athanasius have imitated his example.

More dangerous even than these prohibitions is the principle which underlies them: all that God does not expressly allow, He forbids,<sup>78</sup> just as the Scriptures deny all that they do not affirm.<sup>79</sup> If Christ did not will for Himself either glory or riches, "it was because He rejected them; if He rejected them, He condemned them; if He condemned them, He regarded them as the pomp of the devil."<sup>80</sup> Again, if God has not given to lambs a skin naturally red or blue, it is going against his will to tint their wool to these colours.<sup>81</sup> In these traits, and especially in the last, we see the influence of the Stoic and Cynic philosophies;<sup>82</sup> but if Tertullian echoes this it is because he finds in it the exaggeration in which he himself delights, and in repeating the same ideas he gives them his own impassioned imprint. For Musonius, all this luxury, by which men try to embellish or to burden nature, is unseemly; for Tertullian it is diabolical. The one regards it as a fault, the other as a crime: it is idolatry.

<sup>77</sup> *De fuga*, vi.

<sup>78</sup> *De exhortatione castitatis*, iv: "Quod a Domino permissum non invenitur, id agnoscitur interdictum." The text is so read by Oehler; it is read differently by Rigault, reproduced in Migne (*P.L.*, Vol. II, 919): "Quod a Domino permissum non invenitur, id agnoscitur."

<sup>79</sup> *De monogamia*, iv: "Negat Scriptura quod non notat."

<sup>80</sup> *De idololatria*, xviii.

<sup>81</sup> *De cultu feminarum*, i, 8: "Though God could have made sheep thus, it is clear He has not willed to do so; that which God has not willed to do we have no right to fabricate. Hence these things are not naturally good, for they do not come from God the author of nature; we see therefore that they come from the devil, the corruptor of nature." On all this cf. Tixeront, *op. cit.*, pp. 148-149.

<sup>82</sup> In his dissertation *Philo und die kynisch-stoische Diatribe*, Berlin, 1895, Wendland has studied this moral theme of the condemnation of luxury in the name of nature. We find there many features which remind us of Tertullian; what this great polemist added was the idolatrous and diabolical character of luxury,

*The Montanist*

It was this violent and excessive temperament that led Tertullian into Montanism.<sup>83</sup> The Phrygian prophecy which had burst forth in 172 and so rapidly spread through the Asiatic provinces, had in the West only a distant echo. The Church of Lyons, linked to the Christian communities of Phrygia and Asia by close bonds, had intervened at Rome in 177 in order to still the conflict. At Rome, where the Montanists had tried to carry out some propaganda, they had been rejected by the bishop,<sup>84</sup> and very soon Hippolytus in his *Syntagma* would include Montanism among the thirty-two heresies he denounced.<sup>85</sup> Nevertheless at Carthage this distant and already suspected heresy was to lead Tertullian astray.

Our surprise is greater when we recall how this great polemist was attached to tradition and to the hierarchy, and how in the treatise *De praescriptione* he had stigmatised the anarchy of the Gnostic and Marcionite churches, and lastly, how he seemed to be on his guard against feminine influences. All this was not likely to lead him to be indulgent towards a sect condemned by the whole Asiatic episcopate and based on the authority of its prophetesses.

These obstacles were great, but not insurmountable. In Tertullian a movement of passion could sweep everything away, and we have here a proof of it. This severe moralist found himself faced with an ecclesiastical authority ready to censure his rigours; the new prophecy brought to him the support of an authority which claimed to be divine and supreme. "Hardness of heart reigned until Christ; the weakness of the flesh will have reigned only until the Paraclete; the New Law suppressed divorce, the new Prophecy has suppressed second marriage."<sup>86</sup> The polemist will also find in

<sup>83</sup> On Tertullian as a Montanist, the most complete study is that of P. de Labriolle, *La Crise montaniste*, pp. 294-468. The texts of Tertullian on Montanism are studied by the same author in *Les sources de l'histoire du montanisme*, pp. lxxviii-lxxx, 12-50. In 1924 M. A. Faggiotto set forth in two brochures, *L'Eresia dei Frigi* and *La Diaspora catafrigia, Tertulliano e la nuova profezia*, a new version of events: Tertullian was opposed to Apollonius, but did not pass over to the Montanists. All this is very weak: cf. *Recherches de Science religieuse*, 1925, pp. 373-375.

<sup>84</sup> This bishop, whom Tertullian does not name (*Adversus Praxeas*, i), seems to have been Zephyrinus. "We must put the intrigues of Praxeas between 198 and the very first years of the third century, and we must affirm that they centred around Zephyrinus" (P. de Labriolle, *La Crise montaniste*, p. 275).

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, and *Sources*, pp. xlviii et seq.

<sup>86</sup> *De monogamie*, xiv; ed. Oehler, Vol. I, p. 784.



this authority of the Paraclete a supreme revelation which will silence all heretics and take away all thirst for novelty.<sup>87</sup> For the rest, Christian dogma seems to him to be, not shaken but confirmed by the new Prophecy: "Montanus, Priscilla and Maximilla do not preach another God, or divide Jesus Christ, and do not upset in any way the rule of faith and of hope."<sup>88</sup>

Thus, the theologian like the moralist thinks himself upheld by the highest authority, and further, the spiritual man sees opening before him new perspectives illumined by the Spirit. Tertullian awaited impatiently the end of the world, the new Jerusalem, and the reign of a thousand years. It was revealed to him in the name of the Paraclete that the times were near, that the Antichrist had already appeared.<sup>89</sup> He was told that the heavenly Jerusalem, the descent of which was announced by the Paraclete as the great prelude,<sup>90</sup> had already been seen in Judea. "Every morning for forty days there has been seen a city suspended in the heavens; the line of the ramparts vanishes with the day, and there is nothing more. We say that this city has been prepared in advance by God in order to receive the saints after the resurrection. . . ." <sup>91</sup> From that time his preaching became more urgent, his hatred of the world, the flesh and the present life more implacable: "Why wish to have children? Once we have them we hope they will depart before us, in view of the critical times which threaten us; and we ourselves are impatient to escape from this detestable age and be received by the Lord."<sup>92</sup>

<sup>87</sup> "The Holy Spirit has dissipated all the ambiguities of earlier times, and has replaced arbitrary words by a clear and limpid explanation of the whole faith, through the new Prophecy which flows from the Paraclete. If you draw from these sources, you will no longer thirst after any doctrine, nor be consumed by the fever of any problem. By constantly imbibing the resurrection of the flesh, you will be refreshed." (*De resurrectione carnis*, lxiii, ed. Kroymann, p. 125).

<sup>88</sup> *De jejuniis* (ed. Oehler, Vol. I, p. 851). Cf. *Adv. Prax.*, ii: "We have always believed, but we believe still more now that the Paraclete, the guide who leads to all truth, has given us more light."

<sup>89</sup> *De fuga*, xii (ed. Oehler, Vol. I, p. 487).

<sup>90</sup> *Adversus Marcionem*, III, xxiv (ed. Kroymann, p. 419).

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.* On all this cf. P. de Labriolle, *op. cit.*, pp. 330 *et seq.*

<sup>92</sup> *Ad uxorem*, I, v. In the *Exhortatio castitatis*, xii, the moralist returns to the same theme: "The Christian, like the Apostle, should have only one desire, and that is, not to survive in his children but to depart from this world." He adds other unpleasant observations: "the laws will have to compel men to have children, for no wise man would spontaneously desire them."

*The Church and the Spirit*

This assurance of the speedy coming of the Last Day, given him by Prophecy, filled him with a sombre joy. But he rejoiced still more keenly at the possession of the Spirit which Prophecy ensured him. The Catholics whom he had abandoned were for him only the "psychicals," or Christians of a second order; the true Church, his own, is the Spirit. "The Church is properly and essentially the Spirit itself."<sup>93</sup> It alone has the power to forgive sins, but it does not wish to use it. "The Paraclete himself has said through the new prophets: The Church has the power to forgive sins; but I will not do this, for fear they should commit still more faults."<sup>94</sup> In this jealously guarded little church, the Spirit, in his view, distributes the charisms. Tertullian recalls with pride: "We have amongst us a sister who has the charism of revelations. In the course of the Sunday solemnities she receives them in spirit during her ecstasies. She converses with the angels and sometimes even with the Lord; she sees and hears mysterious truths; she can read hearts, and prescribes remedies for those who are ill. Whether the Scriptures are being read, or psalms are sung, or discourses are pronounced, or prayers are being said, every exercise furnishes matter for her visions."<sup>95</sup>

Led on by these mirages, the great polemist wandered farther and farther away from the Church, and like the heretics he had so vigorously combated, he made a schism even within the heresy he had embraced; he separated from the general body of the Montanists and formed a little group of "Tertullianists."<sup>96</sup> In the end he himself "had no longer even a church," but was "without mother,

<sup>93</sup> *De pudicitia*, xxi, 16.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, xxi, 7. On the problem of penance, we have mentioned above (p. 709) the two contradictory theses maintained by Tertullian as a Catholic and as a Montanist.

<sup>95</sup> *De anima*, ix. Cf. P. de Labriolle, *Sources*, p. 21. Tertullian goes on to say that the seer, after a conversation concerning the soul, had a corporeal vision of a human soul: "It seemed to be a spirit, but not deprived of consistence and form: quite the contrary. It seemed capable of being grasped, it was soft, luminous, of the colour of air, and in form just like that of the human body." Tertullian rejoices thus to have his materialistic conceptions confirmed by a vision.

<sup>96</sup> St. Augustine (*De haereticis*, lxxxvi) tells us about these. In his time they still had a basilica, but after a colloquy with Augustine they were reconciled, and gave up their church to the Catholics.

without faith, exiled, and wandering about like a vagabond and an outlaw."

After his death, he left in the Church the sorrowful memory of a great man who had well served it and had then cruelly attacked it. His works were not forgotten: they were read and utilised, but the name of their author was not mentioned. This kind of interdict lasted for a century; Lactantius is the first to name Tertullian; St. Jerome often quotes him; Vincent of Lerins devotes to him a chapter of his *Commonitorium* (ch. xxiv); Tertullian is for him an example of a man of great talent who might have been a great power for the Church, but who became instead a great difficulty.<sup>97</sup>

To-day the echoes of the Montanist controversy have long since died away, but the lesson is constantly before our eyes. We cannot contemplate the ambitions and errors of Tertullian without recalling the words of Irenæus:

Where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God; and where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church and all grace, and the Spirit is truth. Thus, those who do not form part of her do not receive from her maternal breasts the food of life, and do not drink from the pure water which flows from the body of Christ; but they dig for themselves leaky cisterns in earthen ditches, and drink muddy water: they depart from the faith of the Church which would be their guide, they reject the Spirit which would instruct them.<sup>98</sup>

This man, whose talents were so brilliant, and whose character was so generous, had one high ambition, to possess the Spirit of God. But he sought it outside the Church, in a Spirit-Church of his imagination, and in this dream he lost everything.

## § 2. ST. CYPRIAN<sup>1</sup>

### *Prestige of St. Cyprian*

St. Cyprian had neither the literary talent of Tertullian, nor the theological erudition and wide views of Irenæus or Origen. But

<sup>97</sup> Vincent passes a similar judgment upon both Tertullian and Origen. But there is a great distance between these two men, as we shall see from the next chapter.

<sup>98</sup> *Adv. haereses*, III, xxiv, 1.

<sup>1</sup> Bibliography.—Editions: Hartel, *Corpus Script. Eccles. Latin.*, I-III, 1868-1871; Letters, text and French translation by Bayard, Paris, 1925, 2 vols.—Studies: Monceaux, *Histoire littéraire de l'Afrique chrétienne*, Vol. II, 1902;

he enjoyed an incomparable prestige in Antiquity. In Africa he was the most popular figure of all, and his veneration even gave rise to abuses which had to be repressed. His authority, in spite of some incorrect views on certain points, was recognised by all, including St. Augustine himself. In the East, Macarius Magnes praised him as a thaumaturge.<sup>2</sup> The appearance of the legend of Cyprian the Magus at Antioch shows the wide diffusion of his cult.<sup>3</sup> At Constantinople his authority was so great at the time of the second Council, that the Macedonians attributed to him the *De Trinitate* of Novatian in order to claim support for their errors.<sup>4</sup> These testimonies, which could be multiplied, are due to the glory of his martyrdom, the authority of his see, and also to the outstanding excellence of his noble, elevated and truly royal soul.

### St. Cyprian's Conversion

His Christian life, which had such a brilliant lustre, was very short, and lasted scarcely ten years. He was born in the beginning of the third century, and became a rhetorician and professor of Rhetoric.<sup>5</sup> He was converted by the priest Caecilius. He has himself, in his *Liber ad Donatum*, described with much candour and freshness his first Christian impressions:

I was wandering blindly in the darkness of the night, tossed here and there in the stormy sea of the world; I was adrift, ignorant of my life,

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*Saint Cyprien* (coll. *Les Saints*), 1914; D'Alès, *Théologie de saint Cyprien*, 1922; P. de Labriolle, *Histoire de la Littérature latine chrétienne*, pp. 176-225; E. W. Benson, *Cyprian, his Life, his Times, his Work*, London, 1897; J. Tixeront, *Mélanges de Patrologie*, 1921, pp. 152-209; P. Batiffol, *L'Eglise naissante*, pp. 399-484.

D'Alès dates St. Cyprian's works thus (*op. cit.*, p. xiii): Before 249: *Ad Donatum*; 249: *Ad Quirinum Testimoniorum libri III*; *De habitu virginum*; 251: *De lapsis*, *De catholicae ecclesiae unitate*; 252: *De dominica oratione*, *Ad Demetrianum*, *De mortalitate*; 253: *De opere et eleemosynis*; 256: *De bono patientiae*, *De zelo et livore*; 257: *Ad Fortunatum de exhortatione martyrii*.

<sup>2</sup> *Apocriticus*, ed. Blondel, 1876, Vol. III, xxiv, p. 109.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Delehaye, *Cyprien d'Antioche et Cyprien de Carthage*, in *Analecta Bollandiana*, 1921, pp. 314-332. "Few martyrs achieved so universal a fame" (p. 315).

<sup>4</sup> Rufinus, *De adulteratione librorum Origenis*.

<sup>5</sup> At any rate, that is what St. Jerome says. A. Beck, in his dissertation *Römisches Recht bei Tertullian und Cyprian*, Halle, 1939, has studied the legal knowledge of Cyprian. This shows that he was not a professional like Tertullian, but at least a student. Beck thinks that he may have held a post in the municipal or civil administration.

and a stranger to truth and light. In view of my life as it then was, I thought that which the divine goodness promised me for my salvation very hard. How could a man be born again to a new life? . . . That is what I often asked myself, for I was entangled in the thousand errors of my previous life; I did not think I could get free from them, for I was so much the slave of my vices . . . and I had such complaisance in the evils which had become my constant companions. But the regenerating water washed me from the stains of my previous life, and a light from on high shone into my heart thus purified from its corruptions, and the Spirit coming from heaven changed me into a new man by a second birth. And immediately, in a wonderful way I saw certitude take the place of doubt. The doors that had been shut opened, and light shone in the darkness; I found that which before had seemed difficult to be easy, and possible that which I had thought impossible. . . . You doubtless know and recognise with me what this death of vice and resurrection of virtue took away from me and brought to me in its place. You yourself know this, and I do not boast of it. To praise oneself is a hateful bragging. Yet it may be, not bragging but gratitude, to recall what is attributed, not to the virtue of man but to the blessing of God. To sin no more is the first effect of the faith, and past sins were the effect of human error. From God, I say, comes all our virtue. From God comes our life and our power.<sup>6</sup>

These words will be dear to St. Augustine, and already we hear in them the language of the *Confessions*. Even more than written works, the facts show the reality and depth of his conversion. From the first day, Cyprian aspired to the perfect life; even before his baptism he took a vow of continence,<sup>7</sup> and distributed to the poor a great part of his possessions. To this detachment from goods was joined another, very rare at that time, a detachment from pagan literature. Novatian was full of memories of Virgil; Tertullian, Lactantius, Jerome and Augustine delighted to quote profane authors, and still more often to utilise them. Cyprian, on the other

<sup>6</sup> *Ad Donatum*, iii-iv. Cf. *ibid.*, xiv-xv; Monceaux, *op. cit.*, pp. 204 *et seq.*; D'Alès, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-23.

<sup>7</sup> This is stated by Pontius, the deacon who wrote the *Life* of Cyprian, *Vita*, ii. On this biography, cf. Monceaux, *op. cit.*, pp. 190-197. This decision of Cyprian is all the more remarkable in that the priest Caecilius, who had converted and baptised him, was married and when dying left to him the care of his wife and children. It must be noted that the case of Caecilius was at that date exceptional in Africa. "We do not find in the works of Cyprian a single married priest, other than perhaps the unhappy Novatus, who had caused an abortion in his wife by a kick in the stomach (*Epist.*, lii, 2). But did that incident take place after the priestly ordination of Novatus?" (D'Alès, *op. cit.*, p. 315).

hand, wished to forget them all; he quoted only the Bible. Apart from this, there were some books which he constantly read, but he copied nothing from them: these were the works of his great and unfortunate predecessor Tertullian, which he regarded as covered with a veil of mourning.<sup>8</sup>

Revelations and visions occupy a prominent place in the life and writings of Cyprian.<sup>9</sup> Some of his contemporaries were scandalised at this;<sup>10</sup> and more than one historian, even to-day, is surprised at it. But if we are to judge the matter fairly, we must recall the wonderful mental equilibrium of this man, his unusual virtues, and also the exceptional difficulties he had to overcome.<sup>11</sup>

### *Cyprian as a Bishop*

From his baptism, Cyprian took a prominent part in the church of Carthage; he stood out because of his social rank, his fortune, his talents, and above all because of his virtues. He was very soon raised to the priesthood, and already in the first months of 249 he was elected bishop on the death of bishop Donatus.<sup>12</sup> He tried in vain to escape from so great an honour; the almost unanimous will of the priests and faithful of Carthage constrained him to accept the post. There were, however, a few opponents, and at their head

<sup>8</sup> Monceaux, who points out this reserve on the part of Cyprian, rightly adds (*op. cit.*, p. 208): "He affected an ignorance of all literature stained with idolatry . . . even the Rhetoric which he had taught when in the world. We shall see that Rhetoric had its revenge, and that though the ideas of the bishop were free from it, his style was not."

<sup>9</sup> The most notable instances are given by D'Alès, *op. cit.*, pp. 80-82. Harnack has devoted a complete article to this question: *Cyprian als Enthusiast*, in *Zeitschrift für N. T. Wissenschaft*, 1902, pp. 177-191. Some features disfigure this study, as for instance this one: "Cyprian, by his combination of episcopatism and enthusiasm, became, so to speak, the first Pope, and much time had to elapse before he had a successor." Infallibility seems to be confused here with inspiration.

<sup>10</sup> E.g. Florentius, to whom Cyprian replies (*Epist.*, lxvi, 10): "I know, of course, that some think dreams ridiculous and visions absurd, but these are precisely the ones who prefer to believe against the bishops rather than believe a bishop. After all, there is nothing astonishing in this, for the brethren of Joseph said of him: 'Behold our dreamer cometh, come, let us kill him,' and the dreamer later on saw his dream come true, and his would-be murderers and those who sold him, confounded. . . ."

<sup>11</sup> We must also mention the examples of so many of his contemporaries, even among the greatest and wisest, as for instance St. Dionysius of Alexandria. Cf. Bk. IV.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *Epist.*, lix, 6.

five priests who very soon conducted against Cyprian a campaign of jealous opposition, as we shall see.

The new bishop found himself in charge of a numerous church, but one enervated by a long period of peace. He has himself described its weaknesses in his *Treatise on the Lapsed*:

Each one thought only of increasing his patrimony. They forgot what believers had done previously under the Apostles, and ought always to do. Men were consumed with an insatiable covetousness, and worked only to increase their fortunes. There was no devotion in the priests, no faith in the ministers of worship, no mercy in works, no discipline in manners. Men dyed their beards, and women painted their faces. They changed the work of God by staining their eyes and altering the colour of their hair. Artifices and frauds were used to deceive the hearts of the simple; some did not hesitate to have recourse to trickery to circumvent their brethren. People married unbelievers, thus prostituting to Gentiles the members of Christ. Not only did people swear rashly, but they also perjured themselves; they proudly despised the heads of the Church, they injured one another with poisonous words, and separated from one another by tenacious hatreds. Most of the bishops, who ought to have exhorted all the rest and given them an example, neglected their divine functions and became the lackeys of the great ones of this world. They left their pulpits and abandoned their people, to travel about in foreign provinces and to seek to enrich themselves by gainful commerce. At a time when their brethren were hungry in the Church, they wished to have money in abundance, they acquired landed property by cunning and by fraud, and increased their gains by usury.<sup>13</sup>

In a picture of this kind we must expect the exaggeration usual in moralists and orators, but it cannot be wholly wrong. On the eve of the Decian persecution, other documents echo this page of Cyprian.<sup>14</sup> Some points, such as the picture of the usurious bishop, are too precise not to be true: was this not an anticipation of what the Church of Antioch had to suffer fifteen or twenty years later in the person of its bishop, Paul of Samosata?

### *The Persecution and the Apostasies*

The bishop of Carthage contemplated with sadness this lukewarmness in his flock. God revealed to him one day the punishment

<sup>13</sup> *De lapsis*, vi.

<sup>14</sup> See, for instance, Origen, *Homil. in Jerem.*, IV, iii; cf. Bk. IV.

prepared for it. He showed him in a vision the Father, with his Son on His right hand; the latter seemed sad and discontented. On the other side was a personage armed with a net which he was preparing to cast over the people.<sup>15</sup> Very soon, in fact, the whole Roman world was to be cast into a net: the persecuting edict published by Decius on his accession (beginning of 250) affected for the first time all the subjects of the Empire and compelled them to offer sacrifice.<sup>16</sup>

Coming after the rule of Philip the Arabian, who had been so favourably disposed towards Christianity, this sudden proscription was a terrible awakening for the Christians. At Carthage many fell away:

There were some who did not wait to be apprehended before going up to the Capitol, nor to be interrogated before apostatising. Beaten before the fight, grounded before the assault, many did not even secure for themselves the excuse of seeming to offer sacrifice by compulsion. Of themselves they ran to the Forum, they hastened to (their spiritual) death, as if this had long been their desire and as if they were glad the long-wished-for opportunity had presented itself. How many of the magistrates had to put them off till the morrow, in view of the late hour! How many people begged the magistrates not to defer their deaths. . . . Many were not content to administer death to themselves; they exhorted each other to perdition, they passed from one to another the deadly cup. And to crown all, we have seen children, carried or led by their parents, lose already in their early years what they had received at the threshold of their lives (*De lapsis*, viii-ix).

Others, without sacrificing, purchased a certificate of sacrifice. And what was even more regrettable, confessors themselves took with them into prison the vices of the age:

What punishment do we not deserve, when the confessors themselves, who should give to all an example of good morals, do not conduct themselves as they ought. And thus, because some have allowed themselves to be impudently exalted by the proud and insolent boasting of their confession, tortures have been introduced, not such as are terminated by the executioner, or end with condemnation, or are compensated by death—tortures which do not lead immediately to the crown, but which torment until they overcome, unless the divine goodness brings about amendment in the midst of the tortures, and

<sup>15</sup> *Epist.*, xi, 4.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. *supra*, pp. 791-800.



leads to glory, not by putting an end to the pains but by hastening death.<sup>17</sup>

### *Cyprian's Flight*

Cyprian, menaced more than the rest, and realising moreover that his death would have left the Church of Carthage without guidance, had already hidden himself at the beginning of 250, and remained far from the city until the Spring of 251. This withdrawal was wise, but it put him in a difficult position in regard to the confessors, seeing that he who had not himself suffered had to correct those who had. The opponents who had intrigued against him since his election profited by these fresh difficulties: they tried to stir up a conflict, and then to prevent Cyprian from returning to Carthage. Their tactics failed owing to the fidelity of the majority of the Christians: they found themselves isolated, and as it were self-excommunicated. Nevertheless, they succeeded in delaying the bishop's return.<sup>18</sup>

Not content with intrigues at Carthage itself, they endeavoured to win the support of Rome. Pope Fabian had died a martyr (January 20th, 250), and the persecution was so violent that for fifteen months it was impossible to elect a successor. During this vacancy in the see, authority was exercised by the priests. Amongst these, the most prominent was Novatian, who, when Cornelius was elected, was to oppose him and make a schism. It seems it was he who, in the name of the Roman Church, replied to the denunciations sent by the priests of Carthage. He wrote at least one of the four letters addressed during these fifteen months by the Church of Rome to the Church of Carthage.<sup>19</sup>

At first the Roman clergy, influenced by the evil reports which had come from Carthage, severely condemned the conduct of

<sup>17</sup> *Epist.*, xi, 1. In other letters, Cyprian also rebukes the confessors for pride (*Epist.*, xiii, 4), imprudent relations between men and women (*ibid.*, 5), rivalries and quarrels (5), and insubordination towards priests and deacons (xiv, 3).

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, xliii, 1: "The false malignity of certain priests has succeeded in making it impossible for me to come to you before Easter." This whole letter is full of Cyprian's complaints against the deacon Felicissimus and the five priests whom he had previously seen in a vision as accomplices of the persecuting magistrates (3).

<sup>19</sup> On this correspondence, cf. Harnack, *Die Briefe des römischen Klerus aus der Zeit der Sedisvacanz im Jahre 250*, in *Theologische Abhandlungen Carl von Weizsäcker gewidmet*, Freiburg, 1892, pp. 1-36; D'Alès, *op. cit.*, pp. 141-146.

Cyprian. The good shepherd gives his life for his sheep, the hireling abandons them. "We would, very dear brethren, that there should be found among you, not hirelings, but good shepherds" (*Epist.*, viii, 1). The letter did not bear the name either of the one addressed or of the sender. It fell into the hands of Cyprian, who was very much upset by it, and asked the Romans if it were really authentic (*Epist.*, ix); then he proved to them that during his exile he had not lost sight of his flock: "What I have done my letters will show you, letters which I have sent on various occasions, to the number of thirteen, and which I have communicated to you. Counsels to the clergy, exhortations to the confessors, representations to the exiled when necessary, appeals to all the brethren urging them to beg the divine mercy—nothing has been left undone that my humble self could try to do according to the rules of the faith and the fear of God."

When this letter was written the Roman clergy, better informed, judged more fairly the conduct of Cyprian. So far as Rome was concerned, the misunderstanding was cleared up. At Carthage the opposition was not wholly silenced, but the bishop laboured more actively to this end. At first he had been represented in his episcopal city by the priest Rogatianus, but finding that his authority was not sufficiently respected, he constituted a council composed of two bishops, Caldonius and Herculanus, and two priests, Rogatianus and Numidicus,<sup>20</sup> and administered his church through these. Eventually, in the Spring of 251, he was able to return.

### *The Lapsed*

He found a very strained situation. The most serious question was that of the apostates, or *lapsi*.<sup>21</sup> Many Christians had fallen away in the persecution; they did not wait for the judgment of the bishop in order to be reconciled, but tried to impose it upon him. They were supported by the clergy hostile to Cyprian, and in particular by the five priests who had opposed his election to the see, and also by the confessors who had been exercising in their favour an unlimited and imperious right of pardon. In this very delicate situation, Cyprian was careful to act in close union with the African episcopate and with Rome.

<sup>20</sup> *Epist.*, xli, 1.

<sup>21</sup> We shall find the same question at Alexandria: cf. Bk. IV.

His line of conduct had already been clearly indicated in the letters written during his exile. Towards apostates he kept a prudent reserve; to the clergy he gave wise counsels followed by severe warnings (*Epist.*, xvii); to the confessors he gave great praise, mingled with appeals to prudence:

I learn that some by their impudence are bringing pressure to bear on your reserve, and doing violence to it. Accordingly I beg of you, with all the insistence in my power, to remember the Gospel and to think of what was accorded in the past by the martyrs who were your predecessors, and of their circumspection in all things. I ask you also to weigh with care and prudence the desires expressed to you. You are the friends of God, and will one day judge with Him. Judge, then, the acts, the works, the merits of each one; reflect on the nature and quality of the faults, for fear lest, if your promises are inconsiderate and our indulgence excessive, our Church may have to blush before the pagans themselves (*Epist.*, xv, 3).

He was careful to transmit his decisions to the other African bishops (*Epist.*, xxv, xxvi), and to the Roman clergy who were then without a bishop (*Epist.*, xxvii, xxviii, xxx, xxxi, xxxvi). He informed the clergy of Carthage of his representations to Rome, and the reply he received from thence (*Epist.*, xxix, xxxii). These were to be communicated to any bishop or cleric who should desire them. The decision resulting from such deliberation and supported by such high authorities was irrevocable: "It has been decided once for all, both by ourselves and by the confessors and clergy of the city, and by all the bishops residing either in our province or beyond the sea, to change nothing in the status of apostates before we have all gathered together, and by common agreement, without sacrificing either discipline or mercy, come to a definite decision" (*Epist.*, xliiii, 3).

### *Penance*

On his return to Carthage, Cyprian held a Council of the African bishops. Certain decisions were taken, which he explained and commented on shortly afterwards in his *De lapsis*. The *sacrificati*, who had in fact offered sacrifice, were to do penance; they were to be reconciled only at the moment of death. The *libellatici*, who had procured a certificate of sacrifice, were admitted to penance and could be reconciled. Lastly there were some who, without com-

mitting any external fault, had entertained the idea of denial; these ought to confess this to a priest, who would impose on them a suitable penance.<sup>22</sup> At the Council of 252 the African bishops, fearing a renewal of persecution in consequence of the edict of Trebonius Gallus, wished to fortify against it all the faithful of good will; accordingly they granted pardon to the apostates who had done penance since their fall (*Epist.*, lvii).

At Rome, Pope Cornelius, elected in March, 251, acted in the same way as Cyprian.<sup>23</sup> But at Rome and at Carthage, some schismatics protested against the steps taken. At Rome Novatian refused all pardon, and gathered around him the rigorists; at Carthage Novatus granted reconciliation to all the apostates.

These two men, holding extreme positions, combined against Cyprian and Cornelius; it was a coalition of rigorism and of laxism in a common manifestation of bitterness and ambition.

### *The Schism of Novatus*

At Carthage, five priests had opposed the election of Cyprian. They persevered in their opposition. The bishop did not wish to expel them from the Church; they withdrew of themselves (*Epist.*, xliii, 1). At their head was the priest Novatus; he ordained as deacon his satellite Felicissimus (*Epist.*, lii, 2), who was to be the most active agent in the schism. During Cyprian's exile this intriguer, abusing his office as a deacon, declared that whosoever should accept aid from Cyprian would be regarded as excommunicated. The bishop had replied: "Let the sentence pronounced by him be applied to himself; let him know that he has withdrawn from our communion" (*Epist.*, xli, 2). As the revolted deacon was endeavouring to attract the apostates by the promise of pardon, Cyprian warned these that, if they went over to the party of Felicissimus, "they will no longer be able to return to the Church, nor to return to the communion of the bishops and people of Jesus Christ" (*Epist.*, xliii, 7). The Council of 251 had confirmed the sentence of excommunication pronounced against the schismatics (*Epist.*, lix, 14). Felicissimus thereupon went to Rome, to seek for support

<sup>22</sup> *De lapsis*, xxiii-xxviii. A few months later, Cyprian once more set forth these decisions in his letter to Antonianus (*Epist.*, lv). Cf. D'Alès, *op. cit.*, pp. 282-297.

<sup>23</sup> Letters to Cyprian (*Epist.*, xlix, and 1 in Cyprian's Correspondence; letter to Fabius of Antioch (Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xliii).

there. Cyprian protested against this manœuvre, and wrote to Pope Cornelius to inform him as to the real character of the affair (*Epist.*, lix).<sup>24</sup> At the same time he let the excommunicated ones know that they would not be able to force open the doors of the Church: "If there are any who think they can return to the Church, not by prayers but by threats, if they think they can force an entry, not by lamentations and reparations but by terror, these people can be certain that to such the Church of God is shut. The camp of Christ, inaccessible and fortified and defended by God himself, does not yield to threats. The priest of God, holding to the Gospel and keeping the precepts of Christ, may be killed but he cannot be conquered" (*Epist.*, lix, 17).

### *The Schism of Novatian*

While this schism of Felicissimus was gradually developing at Carthage, another schism broke out at Rome, with much more serious consequences.

At the time when St. Cyprian was returning to Carthage,<sup>25</sup> the see of Rome had at last a new occupant, St. Cornelius. Fifteen months had elapsed since St. Fabian had suffered martyrdom (January 20th, 250); the hatred of Decius was so violent that, in the words of Cyprian (*Epist.*, lv, 9), "he would rather learn that a rival emperor had been set up against him than see established in Rome a bishop of God." It was in these circumstances that Cornelius was elected: "He sat without fear on the episcopal throne at a time when the tyrant, the enemy of the bishops of God, was giving forth fire and flames" (*ibid.*). But the new Pope was to encounter another opposition, less violent indeed, but more painful than that of the imperial power: the opposition of the schism started and maintained by the priest Novatian.

During the vacancy in the see, Novatian had been the most prominent member of the Roman clergy.<sup>26</sup> He was a distinguished writer, to whom we owe a treatise on the Trinity,<sup>27</sup> and he had,

<sup>24</sup> Cf. also *Epist.*, xlv, 4; lii, 2.

<sup>25</sup> Cyprian, hindered by the treacherous malignity of certain priests (*Epist.*, xliii, 1) was not able to return to Carthage before Easter, 251. Easter fell on March 25th; Cornelius was elected Pope at the beginning of March.

<sup>26</sup> It was he who had written to Cyprian letter No. 30 in the name of the Roman clergy. Cf. *supra*, p. 848.

<sup>27</sup> This treatise has been edited by Fausset, *Novatian's Treatise on the Trinity*, Cambridge, 1909, and translated into English by Herbert Moore (S.P.C.K., 1919). On Novatian and his theology, see D'Alès, *Novatien*, Paris, 1925.

until the day of the election of Cornelius, sworn in the most solemn way that he did not in any way desire the episcopate. "Suddenly," writes Cornelius, "he appeared as a bishop, as if he had been thrown into our midst by a mangonel."<sup>28</sup> From the first, the new schism showed itself to be a very violent one; its sudden explosion was followed by an immense conflagration which spread to Italy, Africa, Gaul and the East. "Whereas, by Christ's own institution, there is but one Church spread out in many members in the whole world, and one single episcopate consisting of a great number of bishops united with each other, he in spite of the teaching of God and the unity of the Catholic Church, whose members are united with each other and bound together, has endeavoured to constitute a human Church. He has sent into a great number of cities new apostles of his own choice; . . . and whereas in each city there are bishops regularly ordained, of advanced years and upright faith, faithful in ordeals and proscribed in persecution, he has dared to create above them others, who are false bishops" (*Epist.*, lv, 24). This letter was written in the early months of 252. Novatianism had then been in existence scarcely a year, but it spread rapidly, like Marcionism a century earlier. To use Cyprian's words, it was a human Church in face of the Catholic Church.

At Carthage, the Spring Council (251) was held shortly after Easter, probably in April. The letter in which Pope Cornelius notified his election was received by Cyprian and communicated to the assembly (*Epist.*, xlv, 2). At the same time Cyprian received a letter from Novatian, but refused to read it (*ibid.*). The Council, however, sent two bishops, Caldonius and Fortunatus, to Rome, to gather information concerning the papal election, and it was decided to await their return before definitely taking sides in the dispute (*Epist.*, xlv, 1). This decision was the last word of the Council on the matter.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Letter from Cornelius to Fabius of Antioch (Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xliii, 7). This letter is very valuable because of the information it gives us on the Church and clergy of Rome at that date. Cf. *supra*, p. 784. As for the accusations Cornelius makes concerning the past life and ordination of his rival, these need not be taken too literally. Otherwise we should have to condemn Pope St. Fabian, who had raised Novatian to the priesthood.

<sup>29</sup> This is clear from the incident of Hadrumetum, explained by Cyprian to Cornelius (*Epist.*, xlviii). The priests and deacons, who ruled the church of Hadrumetum in the absence of the bishop Polycarp, had previously addressed their letters to the bishop of Rome, Cornelius; but after Cyprian's visit to Hadrumetum they addressed themselves no longer to Cornelius, but to the priests

Shortly afterwards some envoys came from Novatian, announcing his episcopal consecration. Two bishops, Pompey and Stephen, arrived at the same time, and brought "decisive information and testimonies" (*Epist.*, xlv, 1) in favour of the election of Cornelius. The envoys of Novatian were then definitively dismissed, "refuted, crushed, and convicted of having made a schism" (*ibid.*, 2).

Repulsed by Cyprian, the schismatics did not give up the struggle. They endeavoured to seduce the people, "going from door to door, from place to place, in order to gain recruits for their revolt" (*ibid.*, p. 3). At Rome, Novatian maintained a pitiless penitential discipline towards the apostates, yet he had allied himself with Novatus of Carthage, an upholder of laxism.<sup>30</sup> This alliance shows the true character of the schism: if Novatian set himself up against Cornelius, it was less for the sake of a stricter discipline than for his personal ambition.<sup>31</sup>

As we have seen, from the beginning in 252 Cyprian denounced the sending by Novatian of "apostles" into numerous towns, and the creation of false bishops in face of the legitimate ones.

In presence of these practices Cyprian did not remain idle: in Africa he rallied to Pope Cornelius those who hesitated;<sup>32</sup> at Rome he intervened in the matter of some confessors who had been led astray into the schism, and whom he very soon had the joy of welcoming back "to their mother, that is, the Catholic Church."<sup>33</sup>

and deacons at Rome. Cornelius complained to Cyprian about this; the latter replied that the clergy of Hadrumetum were acting in conformity with the decision of the Council which Cyprian had communicated to them. Cf. Koch, *Cyprianische Untersuchungen*, pp. 125 *et seq.*

<sup>30</sup> Cornelius (*Epist.*, 1) wrote to tell Cyprian of the presence of Novatus at Rome, and his intrigues with Novatian. Cyprian in his reply (*Epist.*, lii) sets forth in detail the activities of the schismatic priest: at Carthage, Novatus had ordained Felicissimus deacon without the knowledge of the bishop; "as Rome, by reason of its importance, is superior to Carthage, he has committed there more important and graver faults. Here he ordained a deacon against the Church, there he made a bishop." According to this letter, the division between the Roman clergy and the election of Novatian would be imputable mainly to Novatus.

<sup>31</sup> Before his election, Novatian had anticipated his rigorism (*Epist.*, xxx), but reserved the solution of the case of apostates to the bishop who should be elected. Cf. D'Alès, *Novatien*, pp. 144 *et seq.*

<sup>32</sup> See the long letter to Antonianus (*Epist.*, lv), who first attached himself to Cornelius following the information given by Cyprian, but subsequently wavered through the intrigues of Novatian.

<sup>33</sup> *Epist.*, xlvii, 1. Letter xlvii was addressed to the schismatic confessors. Out of respect for the bishop of Rome, Cyprian gave the bearer instructions to hand it to the addressees only if Cornelius judged it fitting (*Epist.*, xlvii).

### *The Treatise on the Unity of the Church*

The schisms which then rent asunder the church of Carthage and that of Rome gave rise to the treatise *On the Unity of the Church*.<sup>34</sup> The book had been composed by Cyprian before his return to Carthage; he had made it known to the Council in the Spring of 251 at the same time as his treatise *De lapsis*. The two works were sent to Rome very soon after the election of Pope Cornelius.<sup>35</sup>

This little work is not a theological treatise, but a pressing exhortation by the Bishop of Carthage to his flock, disturbed by the manoeuvres of Novatus and Felicissimus. The persecution had not yet died down; but Christians ought nevertheless to bear in mind that the persecutor was not their only adversary, and to beware still more of the internal enemy who was cunningly attacking them. The devil, seeing people abandon idolatry and deserting his temples, "has invented heresies and schisms in order to ruin the faith, corrupt the truth, and tear unity asunder." To oppose this devil who is transforming himself into an angel of light, it suffices to return to the source of truth. "Now, the Lord said to Peter: 'I say to thee, thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it; I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.' It is upon one that He builds the Church. . . ."<sup>36</sup> Can he who is no longer attached

<sup>34</sup> On this book and its theology, cf. D'Alès, *op. cit.*, pp. 97-140; Chapman, *Studies on the Early Papacy*, London, 1928, pp. 28-50; D. Van den Eynde, *La double édition du De Unitate de saint Cyprien*, in *Revue d'Histoire ecclésiastique*, Vol. XXIX, 1933, pp. 5-24, and on the question specially studied in this last article see Lebreton, *La double édition du De Unitate de saint Cyprien* in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XXIV, 1934, pp. 456-467.

[The whole question of the two editions of the *De Unitate* has been studied anew, in the light of the manuscript tradition, by Maurice Bevenot, S.J., in a volume in the *Bellarmino Series*, published in 1938.—Tr.]

<sup>35</sup> They were sent before letter liv, in which Cyprian tells the reconciled schismatics that they ought to appreciate this work. This succession of facts indicates the destination of the treatise: when Cyprian began it he had in mind, not the schism of Novatian, which had not yet begun, but the schism of Felicissimus. Cf. *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XXIV, 1934, pp. 457-458.

<sup>36</sup> The text which we translate here adds: "After the resurrection, He gave to all the apostles a like power, saying to them: 'As the Father hath sent me, I send you. Receive the Holy Ghost, whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven; whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.' Nevertheless, in order to indicate unity, He arranged by his authority that this unity should have its source in one.



to this unity of the Church think himself still attached to the faith? Can he who opposes and resists the Church reckon that he remains in the Church?"<sup>37</sup>

The bishops have the duty of safeguarding this unity: "The episcopate is one and undivided," and each bishop holds his part conjointly with the rest.<sup>38</sup> It is a tree which extends its branches over all the earth, it is a light which shines throughout the world, it is a river whose branches spread fertility everywhere. "But there is only one head, there is only one source, only one mother; it is from her womb that we are born, it is her milk that nourishes us, it is her spirit which animates us."

We see in these fervent affirmations Cyprian's attachment to the unity of the Church, but in these symbols we can also see an anticipation of the various questions which are going to weigh on his mind. Is this possession of the government of the Church by all the bishops conjointly sufficient to safeguard unity? If serious divergences lead some members of the episcopate to oppose others, what authority will be able to impose itself upon all and put an end

Certainly the other apostles were what Peter was, sharing the same honour and the same power, but unity is the starting point, in order to show that the Church of Christ is one. It is this one Church which the Holy Spirit designates in the Canticle of Canticles, saying in the name of Christ: 'my dove, my perfect one is one, she is one for her mother, chosen for her who generated her.'

<sup>37</sup> Besides the text which we have just translated, there is another version, itself also attested by early witnesses and by the testimony of important manuscripts. After citing *Matthew* xvi, 18-19, this text continues: "And to the same (Peter) after his resurrection (the Lord) says: 'Feed my sheep.' Upon him He builds the Church, and to him He has given the feeding of his sheep. And although He gives a like power to all the apostles, nevertheless He establishes one single chair, and by his authority He founds the origin and character of unity. The others were what Peter was; but the primacy was given to Peter, to show that the Church is one and that the chair is one. And all are shepherds, but we see that there is only one flock, which all the apostles feed in unanimous accord. Can he who is no longer attached to this unity of the Church think himself still attached to the faith? Can he who abandons the chair of Peter, upon whom the Church was founded, hope to remain in the Church? For the blessed Paul gives us this teaching, and manifests the mystery of unity saying: 'One single body and one single spirit, one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God.'" On the origin and bearing of these two versions, cf. Bk. IV.

<sup>38</sup> We notice these juridical texts: "Ut episcopatum unum atque indivisum probemus"; "episcopatus unus est, cujus a singulis in solidum pars tenetur" (v). We recognise in this theologian a jurist to whom Roman law is familiar. [I translate "in solidum" as "conjointly with the rest," which seems to be Cyprian's meaning. Dr. Kidd translates: "enjoys full possession," which is the Ciceronian, but not the juridical, sense of the phrase. Cf. p. 871, n. 89.—Tr.]

to the conflict? Already at this date we foresee in the treatise on the Unity of the Church the controversy which will very soon oppose Carthage to Rome, and St. Cyprian to St. Stephen.<sup>39</sup>

### *Cyprian and Cornelius*

At the time of which we are writing, however, these events were still far off. Some slight misunderstandings might arise between St. Cyprian and St. Cornelius,<sup>40</sup> but they were soon settled, and between the two great bishops there existed a close concord the memory of which will be perpetuated by the Church of Rome by naming in its diptychs Cyprian side by side with Cornelius. Both of them waged war against Novatian, and this severe struggle was carried on throughout the whole Church. Thirty-five years earlier, the schism of Hippolytus had divided the Roman Church, but it had not extended its ravages outside Rome. Novatian was more enterprising, and truly acted as an antipope. He endeavoured, though in vain, to plead his cause with Dionysius of Alexandria.<sup>41</sup>

He at least succeeded in shaking Fabius of Antioch, and in upsetting the East. St. Cornelius had to open the eyes of the bishop of Antioch and bring him back to unity by a vehement letter.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>39</sup> In ch. xi, Cyprian denies the validity of baptism conferred by schismatics (text quoted below, p. 862). And later (ch. xix) he attacks those who neglect the divine tradition and substitute for it a human invention. Similarly in letter xliii, 6: "They reject the commandment of God, and endeavour to establish their own tradition." On the other hand, during the vacancy in the see of Rome, we find Novatian while still a Catholic putting forth this maxim, which six years later will be repeated by Cyprian against Stephen: "Nihil innovandum" (*Epist.*, xxx 8). Cf. D'Alès, *Novatien*, p. 148.

<sup>40</sup> The incident of Hadrumetum (cf. *supra* p. 853, n. 29) had displeased Cornelius; Cyprian in 252 was upset by the action taken at Rome by the Carthaginian schismatics, and the hearing given them at first by Cornelius (*Epist.*, lix). On this letter, cf. D'Alès, *Cyprien*, pp. 160-163.

<sup>41</sup> The letter of Novatian has not come down to us, but Eusebius (*Hist. eccles.*, VI, xlv) gives the reply of Dionysius. It is a model of firmness and of gentleness: "Dionysius to Novatian his brother, health. If as you say you have been led on in spite of yourself, you will show this by returning of your own accord. For all things should have been suffered rather than tear asunder the Church of God. It is not more glorious to undergo martyrdom in order not to adore idols than not to make a schism: indeed, in my opinion the latter is an even greater glory, for in the former case one is a martyr for one's soul only, but in the latter case one is a martyr for the whole Church. . . ." These last words remind us of Cyprian, *De unitate*, xix; it is quite likely that this treatise, which had been sent to Rome, had also reached Alexandria.

<sup>42</sup> This letter is given by Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xliii, 5-22. Cf. above, p. 853.

Fabius died shortly afterwards; a Council was assembled at Antioch by Helenus of Tarsus. Dionysius of Alexandria was summoned to it to meet Helenus and the other bishops, and in particular Firmilian of Caesarea in Cappadocia, and Theoctistus of Caesarea in Palestine. In this Council, some "tried to strengthen the schism";<sup>43</sup> but they were convinced of their error. Thus the whole East enjoyed once more peace in Catholic unity, and St. Dionysius, the great peacemaker, had the joy of conveying this assurance to Pope St. Stephen.<sup>44</sup>

### *Stephen and Cyprian*

In the West, the aftermath of the great storm still agitated the Church. St. Cornelius died in exile (June 253); his successor, Lucius, was in charge for less than a year: returning to Rome after a short exile, he disappeared in his turn on March 5th, 254, and was replaced by St. Stephen, who was to govern the Church a little more than three years (May 254 till August 257). In his relations with St. Cyprian we find from the first some misunderstandings; very soon a grave conflict broke out.

The first matter which caused a disagreement between the two bishops arose out of the lapse of two Spanish prelates,<sup>45</sup> Basilides, Bishop of Leon and Astorga, and Martial, Bishop of Merida. These had accepted certificates of apostasy, and were also charged with other grave faults.<sup>46</sup> As a result, they were once and for all deprived of their sees. Basilides took action at Rome, and succeeded in circumventing and deceiving the Pope. His dismissal, however, was

<sup>43</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xlii, 3, following a letter from Dionysius to Cornelius.

<sup>44</sup> Letter quoted by Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VII, v, 1, ed. Feltoe, p. 41. Further on Dionysius once more gives the Pope his opinion on Novatian: "He has divided the Church; he has drawn aside some of our brethren into impiety and blasphemy; he has introduced an altogether sacrilegious teaching on God; he has very falsely accused our most helpful Lord Jesus Christ of lacking in mercy; and more than all that, he has rejected holy baptism, overthrown the faith and confession which precede it, and completely expelled the Holy Spirit from those who have received Him, although there may be some hope that He remains in them or may return to them." (Letter quoted by Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VII, vii, 6-8.)

<sup>45</sup> On this matter, cf. Villada, *Historia Ecclesiastica de España*, Vol. I, pp. 185 *et seq.*

<sup>46</sup> Basilides admitted that he had blasphemed God; Martial had for some time participated in the banquets of a pagan college, and had had his sons buried amongst the pagans.

called for in virtue of the previous decision of "Cornelius our colleague, a peaceful and just man whom God has even deigned to honour with martyrdom: he decided that such men could no doubt be admitted to penance, but they ought to be removed from the clergy and from the episcopal dignity."<sup>47</sup>

In all this, Cyprian was not directly attacking Stephen; he even took care to excuse the Pope's mistake, and to throw the responsibility for it on those who had deceived him. Even so, there was an opposition of judgment between Rome and Carthage, and the eulogy given to Cornelius seems an indirect criticism of his successor. The letter to the two Spanish churches, subscribed by the bishops assembled at the Council in the autumn of 254, must have been written some six months after the election of Stephen, which had taken place on May 12th.

It was in this same year 254 or in the first months of the next year that letter 68 was sent by Cyprian to Stephen. Faustinus, Bishop of Lyons, had several times written to Carthage and the bishops of the province had written to Rome, to denounce Marcian, the Bishop of Arles, for having adhered to the schism of Novatian and accepting the rigorist thesis. Cyprian told the Pope the steps he ought to take:

You ought to write very plainly to our colleagues in the episcopate who are in Gaul, that they no longer allow Marcian, who is obstinate and proud, and an enemy of divine piety and of the salvation of our brethren, to insult our college. . . . Send, then, to Provence and to the faithful of Arles a letter by virtue of which, Marcian being excommunicated, another may be put in his place, so that the flock of Christ which he has dispersed and which is still wounded and diminished may be gathered together once more (*Epist.*, lxviii, 2-3).

These requirements are based upon the duty of pastors towards their sheep, and on the previous decisions of the episcopate, and in particular of Cornelius and Lucius.

Such has always been our attitude to all and in all places. For we could not be of different opinions, we in whom is one Spirit; it is therefore clear that he who has not the same sentiments as the others does not truly possess the Holy Spirit. Let us know who is sent to Arles in

<sup>47</sup> All these complaints are set forth in letter 67, addressed by Cyprian and thirty-six other bishops to the clergy and faithful of the church of Leon and Astorga and those of the church of Merida.

place of Marcian, so that we may know to whom we are to refer our brethren, and to whom we ourselves are to write (*Ibid.*, 5).

This letter once again shows Cyprian's independence. But at the same time it testifies to the function he attributes to the bishop of Rome. If the Pope is called upon to act, even so it is only he who can so act: neither Faustinus of Lyons nor Cyprian, nor anyone else, can be substituted for the bishop of Rome.<sup>48</sup> We notice also the affirmation of the unanimity of opinion necessarily brought about by the common possession of the Holy Spirit: this is one of Cyprian's favourite ideas.

### *Baptism by Heretics*

Another matter, much more serious than the foregoing, was to test Cyprian's conception of the unity of the Church, and unfortunately to reveal its insufficiency. This was the question of the validity of baptism conferred by heretics.<sup>49</sup>

This question had presented itself since the end of the second century in many churches. Heresies had been springing up, and the many souls who had been led astray for a time and then were converted to the Catholic Church presented a case of conscience which had to be settled. At Rome the ancient tradition was followed, and it was held that the baptism conferred by heretics might be valid,<sup>50</sup> and in that case reconciliation consisted in the imposition of hands. In Africa, on the other hand, it was held that

<sup>48</sup> Was the Pope asked to have a bishop nominated, or to nominate one himself? That is not clear. But we certainly know of examples of episcopal nominations made by the Pope during that period. Cornelius announced to Cyprian (*Epist.*, i, 13-15) that Evaristus, who had passed over to the schism, had been deposed and replaced by Zetus; he also wrote more plainly to Fabius of Antioch (cf. Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xliii, 10) that he had chosen two bishops in place of those who had consecrated Novatian. Lastly Novatian, who behaved like a bishop of Rome, sent to various churches bishops of his own choice (*Epist.*, lv, 24). Cf. D'Alès, *op. cit.*, p. 181.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. D'Alès, art. *Baptême des hérétiques*, in *Dictionnaire apologetique*, Vol. I, col. 390-418.

<sup>50</sup> It was, of course, understood that the formula used had to be that which the Church had received from Our Lord. Accordingly St. Basil criticised St. Dionysius of Alexandria for having allowed the validity of the Montanist baptisms: "How can one accept the baptism of those who baptise in the name of the Father and of the Son and of Montanus or of Priscilla? Those who have been baptised according to a rite which has not been taught us have not been baptised at all" (*Epist.*, II, clxxxviii).

a heretic could never administer a valid baptism. Tertullian had defended this thesis in his treatise *De baptismo* (xv), and about the same date, at the commencement of the third century, a Council of Carthage presided over by Agrippinus had decided in the same sense. The churches of Phrygia and Northern Syria, involved in the struggle against Montanism, had refused to recognise the baptism of these heretics.<sup>51</sup> It is true that this Montanist baptism was invalid by reason of its form, as the Montanists substituted the name of their prophet for that of the Holy Spirit, and baptised "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of Montanus."<sup>52</sup> But at that time, when the theology of the sacraments was as yet imperfectly developed, the distinction between the different baptisms by heretics was not always made. Dionysius of Alexandria had even regarded the Montanist baptism as valid,<sup>53</sup> and inversely, the Africans rejected all baptisms conferred by heretics, not that the form itself was always invalid, but because the minister was unworthy: not having himself the Holy Spirit, he could not give it to anyone. This reasoning was specious and dangerous, and did not allow for the fact that the grace of the sacrament comes, not from the minister who confers it, but from Christ. It is He who baptises, whether the minister be Peter or Judas. Another African, St. Augustine, will defend this doctrine against the Donatists,<sup>54</sup> and he will establish it with so much force that no theologian will be able to forget it afterwards. At the time of St. Cyprian, these theological precisions had not yet been made in a definitive manner. Pope Stephen does not employ them, but he invokes tradition.<sup>55</sup> Cyprian sees in this tradition only an inveterate error, and he wants to correct it: "We must not take refuge behind custom, but conquer this by reason" (*Epist.*, lxxi, 3). Such was the subject of the conflict which for some years was to trouble the Church so deeply.

Already in 251, in his treatise *On the Unity of the Church*

<sup>51</sup> *Epist.*, lxxi, 4; lxxiii, 3; lxxv (letter of Firmilian), 7; Dionysius, letter to Philemon, in Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VII, vii, 5.

<sup>52</sup> Basil, quoted above, p. 704 n. 3.

<sup>53</sup> The testimony of St. Basil, quoted above, p. 860, n. 50, is definite. St. Jerome was therefore wrong in putting Dionysius among the adherents of "the doctrine of Cyprian and of the African Synod" (*De viris illustr.*, lxix). In this matter, as in many others, Dionysius seems to have been above all anxious to preserve the peace, even at the price of a very wide tolerance. Cf. Feltoe, *Dionysius*, pp. 40-59.

<sup>54</sup> *De Baptismo contra Donatistas libri VII: Contra epistulam Petiliani libri III; Contra Cresconium libri IV*; and often in his other works.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. D'Alès, art. mentioned, col. 415.

(ch. xi), Cyprian had affirmed with great force the African thesis. Speaking of the Carthaginian schismatics, he wrote:

Whereas there can be no other baptism than the one baptism, they think they baptise; they have abandoned the source of life, and promise the grace of the living and saving water. Men are not washed thereby but soiled; sins are not therein effaced but increased. This birth gives sons not to God but to the devil. Those who are born of a falsehood cannot lay claim to the promises of truth.

When he expressed himself in that way, Cyprian had in view only the Carthaginian schism of Felicissimus. But very soon the Novatian schism, spreading from Rome throughout the world, would multiply these baptisms conferred by schismatics,<sup>56</sup> and the Church would find a good number of these baptised people who had been led astray for a time and then converted, coming back to her. In their case also, Cyprian could not hesitate:

There can be no other baptism than the one baptism.<sup>57</sup>

At Rome, tradition was not in accordance with this view, and the tradition was upheld. This was true not only of Rome but also of Alexandria and Palestine.<sup>58</sup> In Africa, the decision promulgated by the Council of Carthage presided over by Agrippinus was accepted by the whole episcopate of the Proconsular province and Numidia: Mauretania, less closely attached to Carthage and more open to Roman influence, seems to have followed the traditional usage which Rome had retained.

This opposition could hardly fail to be resented by Cyprian and his entourage. A layman, Magnus, consulted the bishop of Carthage as to the validity of the baptism of the Novatians; the reply was categorical:

<sup>56</sup> In this question, neither Cyprian nor his contemporaries distinguished between schismatics and heretics.

<sup>57</sup> There are numerous texts of Cyprian in this sense; they have been collected by D'Alès, *Théologie de saint Cyprien*, p. 230, n. 1.

<sup>58</sup> On Alexandria, cf. above, p. 861. The Palestinian tradition is implicitly attested by Eusebius. In his account of the baptismal controversy (*Hist. eccles.*, VII, ii, iii *et seq.*), he represents the Roman custom as universally received: "Cyprian, the pastor of the church of Carthage, was the first among his contemporaries to think that only those should be received who had previously been purified from heresy by baptism; but Stephen, holding that nothing should be innovated against the tradition in force from the beginning, was very much upset at that" (*Hist. eccles.*, VII, iii).

Following the opinion inspired in us by the faith of which we are capable, as well as the holiness and truth of the divine Scriptures, we declare that none of the heretics or schismatics has any power, or any right (*Epist.*, lxi, 1).

And after defending his view at length, Cyprian concludes:

I have set forth my opinion: I do not prevent any head of a church from deciding what seems good to him; he will give an account of his conduct to the Lord (*Ibid.*, 17).

### *The Councils of Carthage*

At the autumn Council in 255, in which thirty-one bishops of the Proconsular province took part, Cyprian communicated the replies on the same subject received from eighteen bishops of Numidia to whom the question had been sent. The answer on the part of all was categorical (*Epist.*, lxx). Shortly afterwards, replying to Quintus, a bishop of Mauretania, Cyprian informed him of the foregoing consultation, and emphasised its importance. He expressed his astonishment that other bishops should be of a different opinion. They appealed to custom, but it is reason which should prevail. Peter yielded to Paul: "He taught us not to attach ourselves obstinately to our own opinion, but rather to make our own, when they are in conformity with truth and justice, the good and salutary ideas which may be suggested to us by our brethren and colleagues" (*Epist.*, lxxi, 3).

At the Spring Council of 256, seventy-one bishops of the Proconsular province and Numidia confirmed their former judgment on the baptismal question. They decided in addition that the clerics who returned from heresy to the Church could be admitted only to lay communion. They communicated these decisions to the bishop of Rome, adding: "We do not claim to do violence, or to lay down the law for anyone, each bishop having liberty in the administration of his church, provided he is prepared to give an account of his conduct to the Lord" (*Epist.*, lxxii, 3). The Pope was also sent the two preceding letters. The communicating of these, especially of letter lxxi, which referred to Stephen, must have been very displeasing to the Pope. But Cyprian had only one aim, to bring about the triumph of the truth, cost what it might, and to that end, to make the truth heard.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>59</sup> Cf. D'Alès, *Théologie de saint Cyprien*, p. 190.



About the same date, Cyprian had to answer an enquiry from a Mauretanian bishop, Jubaianus. He sent him the previous documents on the controversy, letters and conciliar decisions, and dealt with some arguments which his correspondent had advanced on the other side. Amongst these there is one the source of which is known to us: it comes from a treatise *De rebaptismate*, written probably by a Mauretanian bishop. It brings forward some rather hazardous considerations which misrepresent rather than maintain the Roman thesis which the author claims to be defending.<sup>60</sup> Other arguments are taken from an anonymous treatise, possibly of Roman origin.

Throughout these discussions, which often wander away from the point at issue, we realise the warmth of the controversy which had aroused the whole Church, and affected especially that of Africa. The Autumn Council in 256, which met on September 1st at Carthage, was larger than ever. Eighty-seven bishops were there, of whom more than fifty came from the Proconsular province and at least thirty from Numidia; the bishops from Mauretania were very few in number, and we do not know anything about them. The Acts of this council have been preserved.<sup>61</sup> They begin with the allocution of the Bishop of Carthage. Cyprian read the letter of Jubaianus and his own reply, and then added:

It remains for us to express our opinion, one by one, without claiming to judge anyone, or to excommunicate those who may not agree with our view. For no one among us sets himself up as a bishop of bishops, no one tyrannises over his colleagues, nor terrorises them in order to compel their assent, seeing that every bishop is free to exercise his power as he thinks best, and can no more be judged by another than he himself can judge another. But we must all await the judgment of Our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom alone it belongs to set us over the government of his Church and to judge our conduct.<sup>62</sup>

In speaking in this manner to his colleagues in the African episcopate, Cyprian wished to remind them of their independence, and to make it clear that he would not exert any pressure upon them. But it is difficult not to see in his rather strong language a reference to another bishop whose authority, greater still than that

<sup>60</sup> Cf. D'Alès, *ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> *Sententiae Episcoporum numero lxxxvii de haereticis baptizandis* (ed. Har-  
tel, pp. 435-461).

<sup>62</sup> See the commentary on this in D'Alès, *op. cit.*, p. 197.

of the bishop of Carthage, was making itself felt with an insistence which was already disturbing the Africans. In the discussion, the bishop of Rome is mentioned only once, and then in passing,<sup>63</sup> but he was present in their minds, and some bishops did not display the reserve which Cyprian himself knew how to keep.<sup>64</sup>

### *The Roman Reply*

As soon as the Pope became aware of these conciliar deliberations,<sup>65</sup> he sent to Carthage a severe and peremptory letter. The text has not come down to us in its entirety, but Cyprian quotes a portion of it in a letter to Bishop Pompey:

Amongst other things, either haughty or outside the subject or contradictory, which he has foolishly and imprudently written, he has added this: "If therefore any come to us from the heretics, from whatever sect, let there be no innovation, but let only the tradition be followed, by imposing hands on them to receive them to penance, especially as the heretics themselves do not baptise (again) according to their own particular rite those who come to them from other sects, but merely admit them to communion.

### *Intervention of Firmilian*

The few words of Cyprian we have just read are sufficient to reveal his own feelings. Nevertheless, determined to yield no part of what he considered to be the truth, and finding himself faced by an equally irrevocable decision, he sent one of his deacons, Rogatian, with all the documents of the case, to an Eastern bishop who enjoyed great authority, Firmilian of Caesarea in Cappadocia. Cappadocia, as we have seen, followed the Asiatic custom in the question of baptism, and this was identical with the African usage, and was sanctioned by the Councils of Iconium and Synnada. We may add that Firmilian was a disciple of Origen, strongly attached to the theology of his master, and perhaps resentful of Rome's

<sup>63</sup> By Crescentius of Cirta, who mentions Cyprian's letter to Stephen (viii).

<sup>64</sup> Thus, Therapius of Bulla (lxi): "He who concedes and abandons to heretics the baptism of the Church, is he not a Judas towards the Spouse of Christ?" Zozimus of Tharassa (lvi) recalls the example of Peter: "He at first practised circumcision, then he yielded to Paul who preached the truth."

<sup>65</sup> He had also received the letter of Cyprian mentioned by Crescentius of Cirta; this is perhaps letter lxxii, or possibly a later one (Bayard, *Saint Cyprien, Correspondance*, II, p. 279, n. 2).

severity towards the Alexandrian doctor. He had in addition a particular grievance against Stephen, in that the Pope had dismissed the Eastern bishops sent to him.<sup>66</sup> His reply to Cyprian expressed his wholehearted support, and contained a very severe judgment in respect of Stephen, formulated with a violence which Cyprian himself had always managed to avoid.<sup>67</sup>

After comparing the bishop of Rome to Judas (lxxv, 2), he thus challenges him at the end of his letter:

What quarrels and dissensions you have provoked in the churches of the whole world! What great sin have you committed, in withdrawing yourself from so many flocks! For you have withdrawn yourself—do not deceive yourself as to that—if it be true that the real schismatic is the one who puts himself outside the communion and unity of the Church. You thought you could excommunicate the whole world, but you have excommunicated only yourself alone.

### *Attitude of St. Cyprian*

Did the Pope in fact effectively pronounce the excommunication mentioned by Firmilian? The question is an open one.<sup>68</sup> It seems clear, from letters lxxiv and lxxv, that the rescript which Stephen sent to Carthage contained a formal threat of excommunication;<sup>69</sup> it is also certain that Cyprian did not submit. But we may hold with great probability that the death of St. Stephen in August 257 prevented any actual sentence. Stephen's successor, Sixtus, was certainly in communion with Cyprian<sup>70</sup> and the Eastern bishops,<sup>71</sup> and there is nothing to lead us to suspect that this had required absolution or a retractation. Dionysius of Alexandria seems to have acted in this matter in the role of peacemaker which Irenæus had fulfilled in the time of Victor and the Easter controversy.<sup>72</sup> Here again, Rome was to win the unanimous adhesion of the

<sup>66</sup> *Epist.*, lxxv, 25.

<sup>67</sup> This letter, written in Greek, has come down to us in a Latin translation doubtless made by Cyprian himself (*Epist.*, lxxv).

<sup>68</sup> Cf. D'Alès, *op. cit.*, p. 206, where a bibliography on the question will be found.

<sup>69</sup> The same threat had been made against the Eastern bishops who rebaptised heretics. See the letter of Dionysius in Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VII, v, 4.

<sup>70</sup> We see this by the letter in which Cyprian informs his flock of the martyrdom of the Pope, *Epist.*, lxxx, 1.

<sup>71</sup> Letter of Dionysius, in Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VII, v, 1.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. above, p. 724.

churches to its discipline and doctrine, but she found it best to wait for this with a gentle patience.

This question of fact is a serious one, and rather obscure. But the question of doctrine is much more thorny, and more difficult to resolve. How could a bishop so careful for the unity of the Church enter upon and continue in so dangerous an opposition? He did not do so with a light heart; he had to suffer much in consequence; he held to the end without compromise the doctrines which he regarded as certain, but which experience has shown to be inadequate. These doctrines are not easy to interpret, and it has been well pointed out that the divergences in interpretation are due more to the data of the problem than to religious prejudices.<sup>73</sup>

Amongst these data, in point of fact, some, and these the most apparent, lead the reader towards an episcopalian conception: each bishop is independent in his own sphere; he will render account only to God. We have met with this affirmation in several of the texts quoted in the course of the present chapter; we could quote other examples.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>73</sup> This is pointed out by M. de Labriolle, *op. cit.*, p. 193: "Koch himself, in his Introduction, divides the critics who preceded him into three groups: those who think that Cyprian explicitly accepted the primacy of jurisdiction in the bishop of Rome; those who regard him as representing a characteristic form of episcopatism, excluding any kind of primacy; lastly, those who, taking an intermediate position, think that Cyprian attributed to the Roman church, if not a primacy of a juridical order, at least the authority of a real centre of unity for the universal Church. Now, Otto Ritschl figures in the first category with Dom Chapman; Ehrhard and Tixeront rub shoulders with Loofs and Benson in the second, and in the third we are surprised to find Harnack associated with Funk and Batiffol."

<sup>74</sup> See, for instance, the sentence quoted in the text, from the letter to Antonianus (*Epist.*, lv, 21). And again, writing to Cornelius (*Epist.*, lix, 14): "It has been decided by us unanimously . . . that causes should be heard in the place in which the fault was committed; for a portion of the flock has been allotted to each pastor in order that he should guide and rule it, with the responsibility of rendering an account of his conduct to God." To Magnus (*Epist.*, lxi, 17): "I do not prevent any head of a church from deciding according as he thinks right, provided he is ready to render an account to the Lord of his conduct." To Stephen (*Epist.*, lxxii, 3): "We do not claim to do violence or to lay down the law to anyone, each bishop having complete freedom in the administration of his church, provided he is ready to render account to God for his conduct." To Jubaianus (*Epist.*, lxxiii, 26): "I do not wish to prescribe anything to anyone, nor prevent any bishop from doing as he wills: he has complete freedom of decision." Presidential address to the autumn Council of 256 (*Sent. episcop.*, p. 436): "Every bishop is free to exercise his power as he understands it, and can no more be judged by another bishop than he himself can judge another. . . ." On all these texts and their interpretation, cf. D'Alès, *op. cit.*, pp. 164 *et seq.*

To these texts of Cyprian we may join a Roman text of Novatian, writing

Nevertheless, several of these texts warn us that this independence in each bishop has its limits: this authority may be exercised legitimately only in agreement with the episcopate as a whole: "provided the bond of concord remains, and that indissoluble fidelity to the unity of the Catholic Church continues, each bishop decides his own acts for himself . . . according to his understanding" (*Epist.*, lv, 21). In conformity with this rule, Cyprian does not hesitate to judge and sometimes to condemn the judgments passed by his colleagues.<sup>75</sup>

Tixeront has inferred from these facts that "the actions of Cyprian did not altogether correspond to his theory."<sup>76</sup> It would perhaps be more exact to say that his theory was not the episcopalianism which some have thought to find in certain of his statements. The independence of each bishop was sacred to him, but always saving the unity of the Church and of its concord. Any bishop who offends gravely against this concord must be brought back to it either willingly or by force. Inside the African province, a council presided over by the bishop of Carthage will see to this unity. But who will assure it in the Church as a whole?

It is clear that for Cyprian the bishop of Rome has here an office of the first importance; it is however equally clear that, according to Cyprian, the Pope's prerogatives are confined to limits which

in the name of the clergy of Rome (*Epist.*, xxx, 1): "Those are worthy of a double praise who, while realising that they should subject their conscience only to God their sole judge, nevertheless desire that their conduct be submitted to the approbation of their brethren."

<sup>75</sup> In the name of the Council, probably that of the Autumn of 251, Cyprian reprimands Bishop Therapius of Bulla for having reconciled the priest Victor before the expiration of his canonical penance (*Epist.*, lxiv, 1). In this same letter, addressed to Bishop Fidus, Cyprian in the name of the Council gives concerning the baptism of children a decision contrary to the opinion he had himself set forth (*ibid.*, ii). Other similar instances are mentioned by D'Alès (*op. cit.*, pp. 165 *et seq.*). Lastly, some apostate bishops were deposed, and though they wished to return to their sees, the other bishops opposed this. This was the case with Privatus of Lambesa, condemned by a Council of ninety bishops and also by Pope Fabian and Donatus, Bishop of Carthage (*Epist.*, lix, 10), and again with Fortunatianus of Assuras (*Epist.*, lxxv, 1).

<sup>76</sup> *Théologie anténicéenne*, pp. 387-388. Tixeront adds: "It has been rightly pointed out that, by centralising in his own hands the government of the African Church and preparing for Carthage the title of primatial see, Cyprian had given to his declarations in favour of Rome as the centre of Catholic unity a commentary which was not lost sight of, and which helped to group in an ever more pronounced manner the Christian world around the successor of St. Peter." These remarks are not altogether exact. Cyprian's interventions into other dioceses were not confined merely within the province of Africa.

Stephen himself did not recognise and which the judgment of the Church has definitively set aside. That is the central point in the discussion; let us try to clarify it.

The Roman See is the See of Peter, and the bishops of Rome are the successors of Peter.<sup>77</sup> Again, Christ willed to found his Church on Peter: that is an evident fact which Cyprian never ceases to affirm.<sup>78</sup> If at the beginning Jesus willed to found his Church upon Peter and upon him alone, this was in order to make plain, through the unity of the foundation, the unity which ought always to be the essential character of his Church.<sup>79</sup>

Later on, Jesus conferred upon all the apostles the powers which at first he had given to Peter alone. Must we infer from this that Peter had with regard to the others only a privilege of priority, and that his election, preceding their own, had only the value of a symbol in relation to the unity of the Church? Or must we on the contrary regard the Chair of Peter as the permanent foundation of unity?<sup>80</sup> The reply really admits of no doubt: Cyprian recognises in Peter and his successor, the bishop of Rome, not only a kind of birthright founded upon the chronological priority of Peter's call, but a real primacy. That is implied by the texts,<sup>81</sup> and still more clearly, by facts.

<sup>77</sup> *Ad Fortun.*, xi; *Epist.*, lv, 8; *Epist.*, lix, 14; cf. D'Alès, *op. cit.*, p. 121; Firmilian, *Epist.*, lxxv, 17; *ibid.*, 2.

<sup>78</sup> He affirmed this not only in the first days of his episcopate (*De habitu virginum*, x; *De bono patientiae*, ix; *Epist.*, xliii, 5; *Epist.*, lix, 7; *De unitate ecclesiae*, iv, in its two recensions; *Epist.*, lxvi, 8), but again also at the time of the baptismal quarrel (*Epist.*, lxx, 3; *Epist.*, lxxi, 3; *Epist.*, lxxiii, 7 and 11). We find the same affirmation in Firmilian (*Epist.*, lxxv, 16 and 17) and in the *Sententiae episcoporum*, xii (Fortunatus of Thuccabori).

<sup>79</sup> This thesis is expressly laid down in the *De unitate ecclesiae*, (texts quoted above, pp. 855-857) in its two redactions, but especially in the African redaction (A). Also *Epist.*, lxxiii, 7: "It was first of all to Peter, upon whom He built the Church, and in whom He has established and shown the origin of unity, that the Lord conferred the privilege of seeing unloosed (in heaven) what he would unloose on earth."

<sup>80</sup> The first interpretation has been defended above all by H. Koch, *Cathedra Petri*, 1930, pp. 32-154; the second by D'Alès, *op. cit.*, pp. 91-140 and 389-395, and by B. Poschmann, *Ecclesia Principalis*, 1933.

<sup>81</sup> The most explicit text is found in a letter to Cornelius. Speaking of the Carthaginian schismatics who crossed the sea to intrigue in Rome, Cyprian writes: (*Epist.*, lix, 14): "... They dare to cross the sea to go to the see of Peter and the principal Church, whence episcopal unity has arisen, and to take there letters from schismatics and profane people. For they do not reflect that these are the same Romans whose faith was praised by the apostle, and to whom misbelief cannot have access." Bayard, in his note on this text, interprets it thus: "In all this passage, St. Cyprian means, if I am not mistaken, that being the

In the year 251, Cyprian was faced first with the Carthaginian schism and then with the Roman schism. When the Roman schism broke out, in his opinion it had an extreme gravity which the Carthaginian schism had never possessed, for it attacked the Catholic Church,<sup>82</sup> that is, the universal Church.<sup>83</sup> This may be explained partly by the rapid propagation of the schism of Novatian, but such explanation is not sufficient: when letter xlv was writter, the schism seemed as yet only a local one, and yet already it was denounced by Cyprian as an assault upon the universal Church. That was because it directly affected the Roman church, which is "the womb and root of the Catholic Church."<sup>84</sup>

It is for this reason that the question of the episcopal election at Rome is so grave, and that the Council of Carthage, under the guidance of Cyprian, insisted on taking such great precautions before giving its adhesion to one of the two rival candidates.<sup>85</sup> It was for the same motive that Cyprian was so greatly angered by the manœuvres at Rome of the Carthaginian schismatics: "They

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See of Peter, the Roman Church has continued to be pre-eminently the primary Church, from which all the churches are genealogically derived (cf. *Ad Fortunatum*, xi), and that Christ by the words addressed to Peter founded on Peter first, and on him alone at first, the choice which was to make him the fundamental bond and the type of the unity of the episcopate and of the Church (cf. *Epist.*, lxxiii, 7; *De unitate ecclesiae*, iv). Hence the special importance with regard to unity that he attributes to the church governed by the successor of Peter, though he does not always infer the practical consequences of the premises he lays down, and this is especially true of the present letter."

<sup>82</sup> This expression, "Catholica ecclesia," appears for the first time in Cyprian in letter xlv, 1, which deals with the Novatian schism. From that date "there is not one letter against Novatian in which the term 'catholicus' does not occur." This remark comes from Koch, *Cathedra Petri*, p. 119.

<sup>83</sup> Cf. D'Alès, *op. cit.*, p. 159; *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XXIV, 1934, p. 459.

[A further discussion of St. Cyprian's attitude towards the Roman See will be found in Bk. IV, from the pen of M. Zeiller.—Tr.]

<sup>84</sup> *Epist.*, xlviii, 3: ". . . to enable them to go to Rome without meeting any stumbling-block, we exhorted them to recognise there the womb and root of the Catholic Church, and to attach themselves to it." The reference is to the ascertaining of the true bishop of Rome, Cornelius or Novatian. But this has its capital importance only because of the fact that this church is "ecclesiae catholicae matris et radix." This expression echoes what Cyprian says of the original church founded upon Peter: "Mater, origo et radix, quae ecclesias septem postmodum peperit, ipsa prima et una super petram Domini voce fundata" (*Ad Fortunatum*, xi).

<sup>85</sup> Cyprian explains and justifies these precautions in his letter xlviii to Cornelius.

dare to cross the sea to go to the see of Peter and the principal Church, from which episcopal unity has arisen. . . .”<sup>86</sup> He will express the same indignation against Bishop Basilides who tried to win over Pope Stephen to his side.<sup>87</sup>

This affair of the Spanish bishops and that of Marcian of Arles are very significant. The churches of Leon-Astorga and Merida, which wrote to Carthage, expected from the African bishops only consolation and assistance; from the bishop of Rome Basilides had asked for a judgment. This judgment, in Cyprian’s eyes, was null and void because it had been obtained by fraud. But Stephen’s right to judge was not called in question. As for Marcian, Cyprian himself called upon the Pope to intervene; he did so in a very categorical manner. But this summons in itself, however imperiously worded, bears witness to the right the exercise of which it requests.<sup>88</sup>

Does the independence which Cyprian claims for himself in the matter of heretical baptisms mark, then, an inconsistency and change of position, due to the exigencies of the controversy? It does not seem so. Sincere throughout, and deliberate, Cyprian acted as he thought he ought to act. He was not led into error by passion; he was the victim of an incomplete conception of the unity of the Church and of its government. For him, authority belongs conjointly to the episcopal college;<sup>89</sup> each bishop shares in it, and individual failings are redressed by the members who compose it. At its head is the bishop of Rome; his chair is the chair of Peter, and the Church of Rome is the *ecclesia principalis*, the source and centre of Catholic unity.

At the same time—and it is here that we find the defect in this theological construction—it does not seem that Cyprian attributed to the bishop of Rome the power to impose definitive and irreformable decisions, whether disciplinary or doctrinal. If the Pope is wrong, he isolates himself from the Catholic community, and the

<sup>86</sup> *Epist.*, lix, 14; cf. above, p. 869, n. 81.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, lxvii, 5. Cf. above, p. 858.

<sup>88</sup> On these two matters, cf. D’Alès, *op. cit.*, pp. 175-184, and above, p. 858.

<sup>89</sup> “Episcopatus unus est, cujus a singulis in solidum pars tenetur” (De Cath. Eccl. Unit., v). This thesis, fundamental in St. Cyprian’s church theory, is set forth in juridical terms which make its meaning clear. Cf. D. O. Casel, *Eine missverständene Stelle Cyprians*, in *Revue Bénédictine*, Vol. XXX, 1913, pp. 413-420; D’Alès, *op. cit.*, 131 *et seq.* [Cf. p. 856, n. 38.—Tr.]



other bishops must by warnings and remonstrances bring him to recognise his error. The supreme judge is not the Pope but the Holy Spirit, acting in the Church and directing it.<sup>90</sup>

The danger involved in this conception is evident, and experience painfully revealed it in the baptismal quarrel. To bring the matter to an issue, Cyprian counted on the collective action of the episcopate, enlightening and assisting the successor of Peter. It was in this spirit that he repeated: "A bishop must not only teach but also learn." While waiting for the light, he acted and fought, without seeming to have envisaged in practice the idea that there is a limit where the individual idea of the Christian ought to abdicate in presence of the personal action of Peter, the first pastor of the Church. The consequences could only be disastrous. The dictatorship of individual opinion, exercised by a man without any higher guarantee, easily becomes tyrannical, and when spread throughout a collectivity, even a collectivity of bishops, it leads fatally to anarchy. The Church of the third century had painful experience of this.<sup>91</sup> Cyprian's error, with its consequences which were so painful for himself, and might have become so fatal for the Church, is to be explained by his hasty training (when yet a neophyte he had been straightway elevated to the highest offices in the Church), by the influence of Tertullian, and by the importance, often excessive, he attributed to private inspiration.<sup>92</sup> If there was fault on his part, this fault, as St. Augustine<sup>93</sup> will remark later on, was gloriously effaced by his martyrdom.

### *Abatement of the Conflict*

This conflict, which brought into opposition against the Church of Rome not only Carthage and Africa but also many churches in the East, was abated through the peacemaking action of St.

<sup>90</sup> Cf. what Cyprian wrote concerning Marcan of Arles (*Epist.*, lxxviii, 5): "It is manifest that he whom we find thinking differently from the others is not really animated by the Holy Spirit."

<sup>91</sup> D'Alès, *op. cit.*, pp. 221-222.

<sup>92</sup> He thought that if the bishops remained docile to this inspiration, they could not fail to live in concord and light. In the midst of the baptismal quarrel, immediately after the Spring Council of 256, he wrote: "I do not wish to prescribe anything to anyone, nor to prevent each bishop from doing as he wishes. . . . We have no quarrels with our colleagues and fellow bishops. . . . With patience and gentleness, we keep the union of souls, the honour of the college, the bond of the faith, and the concord of the episcopate" (*Epist.*, lxxiii, 26).

<sup>93</sup> *Epist.*, xciii, 10.

Dionysius of Alexandria, by the patience of the bishop of Rome, St. Sixtus, the "good and peaceful pontiff"<sup>94</sup> who succeeded Pope St. Stephen (August 257 to August 258), and lastly and above all, through the close union of souls brought about by the persecution of Valerian.<sup>95</sup> This comprised among its most glorious episodes the confession of the Bishop of Carthage, known to us, so far as his first appearance is concerned, through the proconsular *Acts*, and for his second appearance, through the account which his flock drew up shortly afterwards.

### *Martyrdom of St. Cyprian*

On August 30th, 257, Cyprian was called before the proconsul, Paternus, who communicated to him the order of the emperors to embrace the Roman religion. Cyprian refused, and was condemned to exile at Curubis. The proconsul asked him for the names of his priests; the bishop refused to denounce them, and set out for Curubis. From his place of exile he encouraged the confessors condemned to the mines (*Epist.*, lxxvi). Very soon a new edict was promulgated; Cyprian wrote to Successus about it, and informed him of the martyrdom of St. Sixtus (*Epist.*, lxxx).

The proconsul ordered him to appear at Utica. Cyprian did not wish to go there; he wanted to die at Carthage, in the midst of his own people; he therefore withdrew and explained to the faithful the motives for his conduct in letter lxxxi, the last which we possess. The proconsul returned to Carthage; Cyprian came out from his retreat; the proconsul Galerius Maximus had him taken to the *Ager Sexti*. He was lodged in the house of an officer. A crowd of Christians assembled in the street before the door of the house. Cyprian, always mindful of his duties as a bishop, ordered them to keep watch over the virgins. On the morning of the next day, September 14th, he appeared before the proconsul. After a short interrogation, Galerius "not without sadness" pronounced sentence: "We order that Thascius Cyprianus be put to death by the sword." The bishop said: "Thanks be to God." He was taken to the *Ager Sexti*, accompanied by a great multitude of Christians.

<sup>94</sup> Such is the description of Sixtus given by Cyprian's deacon and biographer Pontius, *Vita Cypriani*, xiv.

<sup>95</sup> On this persecution, cf. above, pp. 800-806.

There he took off his mantle, knelt down, and prostrated himself to pray to God. Then he took off his dalmatic, giving it to the deacons, and clothed in a linen undergarment, he awaited the executioner. When the executioner arrived, Cyprian told his people to give him twenty-five gold pieces. The brethren cast down before him clothing and towels. The blessed Cyprian himself bound his own eyes. As he could not tie his own hands, the priest Julian and the subdeacon Julian bound them for him. Thus suffered the blessed Cyprian. In order to remove his body from the curiosity of the Gentiles, it was deposited in a place not far distant; then during the night it was removed, to the accompaniment of torches and chants, to the domain of the procurator Macrobius Candidus on the *Via Mappala*, close to the piscines, in the midst of triumphal enthusiasm.

The death of this bishop, offering himself, assisted by his priests and deacons and surrounded by his whole flock with the same dignity and calm as when he so often offered the Eucharist in their midst, was indeed a triumphal sacrifice. The pagans themselves recognised his ascendancy: the proconsul found it hard to condemn him; the executioner also seems to have hesitated before his task; the martyr, assisted by his clergy, had to bandage his own eyes, and arrange for the binding of his hands. Not one hostile shout came from the crowd: there was nothing but the wonder and veneration of the faithful. We realise how much ground had been gained by the Church in Africa since the martyrdom of St. Perpetua. Or if it is desired to go back still further, let this scene be compared with that of the martyrdom of St. Polycarp. At Smyrna the veneration of the faithful for their bishop was no less, but around them the whole populace was hostile. Between 155 and 258 the Church had won not only attention, but also the respect and sympathy of the people. New crises will still be able to afflict her, but already she has conquered.

## THE PAGAN OPPOSITION

§ I. SYNCRETISM<sup>1</sup>*The Syrian Emperors and Christianity*

ABOUT the middle of the second century, and in the first half of the third, pagan opinion was drawn towards the East by powerful currents. The attitude of the Roman government and especially of the hellenic world towards Christianity was influenced by this development. In the days of Nero and Domitian, persecutions broke out like violent bursts of rage; pagan opinion supported the imperial severity with all its hatred and contempt for the new sect. Under the Antonines, especially down to the death of Marcus Aurelius, authority persisted in its policy of repression, while the world of letters began to take action, and writers such as Lucian, Fronto and Celsus declared war upon the Church.

From the reign of Commodus (180-182) and especially under the Severi (193-235), this opposition occasionally relaxed, but above all it changed its character. Syrians had invaded the Empire following Julia Domna, whom Septimius Severus made an empress. With her their deity, the sun-god Heliogabalus, triumphed; in his radiance all other cults were expected to fuse together,<sup>2</sup> and Christianity itself was regarded with a sympathetic curiosity by princes.<sup>3</sup>

*The Life of Apollonius of Tyana*

One of the books which best reflects the Syncretism of the time of the Severi is the *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*,<sup>4</sup> written by

<sup>1</sup> Bibliography.—Toutain, *Les cultes paiens dans l'Empire romain*, Vol. II, 1911, pp. 227-257.

<sup>2</sup> This Syncretism had its origin in the oriental religions; its diffusion was due in great part to the imperial functionaries and officers who were attached to these. It spread mainly at the end of the second century and during the first half of the third. "The inscriptions which are dated belong chiefly to the reigns of Marcus Aurelius Commodus, Septimius Severus, Alexander Severus, Gordian and the first half of the third century" (Toutain, *op. cit.*, p. 256). Cf. J. Reville, *La religion à Rome sous les Sévères*, 1886.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *supra*, pp. 751-759.

<sup>4</sup> Ed. Westermann, Paris, 1849, in collection *Œuvres de Philostrate et Cal-listrate*, pp. 1-194. French translation by Chassang, Paris, 1862, preceded by a

Philostratus at the request of Julia Domna, wife of Septimius Severus. Apollonius, who lived in the first century of our era, had left the memory of a Pythagorean philosopher and a magician.<sup>5</sup> This somewhat vague reputation was transformed in the course of the third century. The magician was celebrated as a thaumaturge, and then venerated as a quasi-deity: Caracalla, Alexander Severus and Aurelian gave him a cultus.<sup>6</sup> In the work of Philostratus, written at the commencement of the century, Apollonius, if not yet a deity, is already more than a man: his figure is rather shadowy and not easy to distinguish in the brilliant cloud which hides rather than illuminates him. He represents the Pythagorean ideal, clothed in linen, drinking only water, and eating only the fruits of the earth,<sup>7</sup> rejecting bloody sacrifices, adoring the Sun and offering to it a sacrifice of incense.<sup>8</sup> He foretells the future,<sup>9</sup> he expels demons; he works miracles.<sup>10</sup> At the same time he is a great traveller, anxious to learn the wisdom of all peoples. He goes to Babylon, to the Indies, and to Ethiopia. All this romance of travel is closely linked with some apocryphal *Acts* of apostles, and especially with those of Thomas.<sup>11</sup> The narrators alike experience the fascination of the mysterious East, which we find Plotinus trying to penetrate about this time,<sup>12</sup> while Mani was founding his first churches.<sup>13</sup> The Brahmins, whose wisdom is admired by Apollonius, are praised

useful introduction. But the chronology of the translator should not be followed. He puts the birth of Philostratus "in the reign of Nero," but adds correctly that the *Life* of Apollonius was written at the request of "the empress Julia Domna, wife of Septimius Severus" (p. 11, n. 1).

<sup>5</sup> Lucian criticises him (*Alexander*, v); Apuleius mentions him, apparently, among other magicians (*Apology*, xc), but the text is rather uncertain. In place of *Apollonius*, the Vallette edition (Paris, 1924) has *Apollobex*.

<sup>6</sup> Caracalla consecrated a *heroon* to him (Dio Cassius, lxxvii, 18); Alexander gave him a place in his *lararium* (*supra*, p. 758); he appeared in a dream to Aurelian and ordered him to spare Tyana; the emperor, who had seen his statue in several temples, obeyed (Vopiscus, *Aurelianus*, xxiv, 3).

<sup>7</sup> *Life*, I, xxxii, 2.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, I, xxxi, 2.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, IV, xx and xxv; VI, xxvii.

<sup>10</sup> He transported himself in a moment from Smyrna to Ephesus, and there defeated a demon who was spreading disease (IV, x). He restored life to a young girl thought to be dead; the grateful father gave him the girl's dowry (IV, xlv).

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Bk. IV.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *infra*, p. 880.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Bk. IV.

also by Clement of Alexandria;<sup>14</sup> was it not said that his master Pantaenus had visited them?<sup>15</sup> This taste for the marvellous and the far away influenced the popular imagination at that time more than ever. Hence Philostratus and his hero might well appeal to their readers.

As for his religion, this was indeed very shadowy and very poor. Hierocles attempted to set up Apollonius as a rival of Christ,<sup>16</sup> but this was a hazardous opinion which the pagans did not long adhere to. The Pythagorean and his romantic biographer will soon relapse into obscurity, and their interest for us now lies only in their character as witnesses of that far off time and of its dreams.

### *Characteristics of Syncretism*

To the oriental religions and the various forms of Gnosticism which then divided the Roman world, Syncretism offered its protection. It welcomed all the cults into its temple, and combined all the gods in one and the same pantheistic divinity.<sup>17</sup> Christianity

<sup>14</sup> *Strom.*, I, xv, 68, 1; 70, 1; 71, 5; 72, 5; III, vii, 60, 2. See also Numenius, quoted below, p. 878.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. *infra*, p. 894, n. 9.

<sup>16</sup> This attempt on the part of Hierocles is known through its refutation by Eusebius. We notice that according to the testimony of Eusebius himself (*Contra Hieroclem*, 1) that Hierocles was the first who dared to oppose Apollonius to Jesus. Philostratus had been more reserved: "he was clever enough to make no direct reference to Christianity, . . . and merely to suggest conclusions which he nowhere set forth himself" (P. de Labriolle, *La Réaction païenne*, p. 188). We find a refutation of Hierocles in Macarius Magnes, *Apocriticus*, ed. Blondel, pp. 52 and 66. From that date the name of Apollonius of Tyana became hateful to Christians, and remained so for a long time.

<sup>17</sup> Hippolytus has conserved this hymn, chanted to Attis by the faithful: "Whether thou art called the happy son of Chronos, or of Zeus, or of the great Rhea, health, O Attis, name cruel to the heart of Rhea! Thou art called by the Assyrians the most desirable Adonis; all Egypt calls thee Osiris; Greece wisdom, the heavenly crescent of the Moon; Samothrace, the venerable Adam; the Hemonians Corybantes; the Phrygians sometimes Papas, sometimes Corpse, or God, or the Sterile one, or Goat-herd, or the green ear of corn cut down, or the fluteplayer who brought forth the fruitful almond" (*Philos.* V, ix, 8). Irenæus says: "(Simon) taught that it was He who had appeared among the Jews as the Son, had descended at Samaria as the Father, and come to other peoples as the Holy Spirit; He is, according to him, the most sublime Power, that is the Father who is above all things, and He allows himself to be called by every name given him by men" (*Adversus haereses*, I, xxiii, 1). Similarly the Syrian goddess was identified with all the gods; so also Isis (*Apuleius, Metam.*, xi, 1; viii, 25). Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 16 et seq.

could not possibly take part in such a fusion, for its God is the One God.<sup>18</sup>

In the persecutions, Syncretism could thus present a new danger for Christianity, and it constituted one in daily life. In this hellenic world which had so long despised Christianity, we begin to find in certain writers advances which might constitute temptations for Christians.

### Numenius

Of these writers, the one we know best is Numenius.<sup>19</sup> He lived in the second century, and claimed to follow Pythagoras and Plato, at the same time affirming that "we must consult the most noble nations, and study their initiations, their doctrines and institutions, which are completely in agreement with Plato; such are the Brahmins, the Jews, the magi, and the Egyptians."<sup>20</sup> It was Numenius also who said: "What is Plato if not a Moses who speaks Greek?"<sup>21</sup> He regarded Moses as a man who could influence God by his prayers, but he also thought that the Egyptian priests Jannes and Jambres had by their magical knowledge conjured up the plagues inflicted by Moses.<sup>22</sup> He gave an allegorical interpretation of the Jewish prophets, and even of a life of Jesus which he does not name, and these allegories did not altogether displease Origen, who brings them up against Celsus.<sup>23</sup>

This philosopher, so benevolent towards the Jews and even to Christians, was absolutely opposed to the sceptics and all the

<sup>18</sup> During the Valerian persecution, in 257, Dionysius of Alexandria appeared before the Prefect of Egypt, Aemilian. Called upon to adore the gods, he replied that he worshipped the one God, Creator of all beings. Aemilian replied: "What then hinders you from adoring him, if he is God, with those who are gods by nature? For you are commanded to adore the gods, and those who are recognised by all." Dionysius replied: "We do not adore any other" (Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xi, 8-9). (Cf. Feltoe, *Dionysius*, p. 31.)

<sup>19</sup> We have only fragments of his writings, mostly quotations by Eusebius in his *Praeparatio evangelica*. Some others are quoted by Stobaeus and Proclus, in *Timaeum*. Clement mentions him (*Strom.*, I, xxii, 150), and also Origen, *Contra Celsum*, I, xv; IV, li. The fragments of Numenius have been collected by Mullach, *Fragmenta Philosophorum Graecorum*, Vol. III, pp. 152-174, Paris, 1879; the editor has added some comments, pp. 183-4.

<sup>20</sup> Quoted by Eusebius, *Praep. evang.*, IX, vii. *Fragm.*, p. 165.

<sup>21</sup> Eusebius, *Praep. evang.*, XI, x; Clement, *Strom.*, I, xxii, 150, 4. *Fragm.*, p. 166.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, IX, viii. *Fragm.*, p. 165.

<sup>23</sup> *Contra Celsum*, I, xv; IV, li.

philosophers of the New Academy, Arcesilas,<sup>24</sup> Carneades<sup>25</sup> and the rest. He worked out a religious philosophy: the divinity is immaterial;<sup>26</sup> he recognises a first god, who is simple, the second and the third are one. The first is father, the second is the demiurge. One can liken the first to the farmer, and the second to the labourer who plants. The first scatters the seeds of all souls; the second arranges and distributes these seeds. The second proceeds from the first like a torch which is lit from another.<sup>27</sup>

It is difficult to derive from these statements of Eusebius a definite and precise idea. But at any rate we can distinguish without difficulty a Christian and a Gnostic influence. The comparison of the torch was a classic one in the apologists;<sup>28</sup> the identification of the second god with the Demiurge had been made by Basilides and Marcion.<sup>29</sup> Last but not least, the thesis so willingly adopted of the identity of the doctrines of Moses and Plato rejoins the affirmations of the apologists concerning the plagiarisms of the Greeks. This concession was bound to lead to a vigorous reaction on the part of the strict adherents of hellenism.

## § 2. NEOPLATONISM<sup>1</sup>

### *Plotinus*

The centre of this reaction was the Neoplatonist school. Founded at the beginning of the third century by Ammonius Saccas, this school was to benefit by Plotinus and his doctrine, and then to produce in the person of Porphyry the bitterest opponent of the Christians.

<sup>24</sup> Eusebius, *Praep. evang.*, XIV, vi. *Fragm.*, pp. 155-158.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, XIV, viii. *Fragm.*, pp. 161-163. Eusebius, however, regards him as "a robber and a liar cleverer than Arcesilas."

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, XI, x. *Fragm.*, pp. 166-167.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, XI, xviii. *Fragm.*, pp. 167-170.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. *supra*, Bk. II, p. 569.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. above, pp. 625, 643.

<sup>1</sup> Bibliography.—C. Schmidt, *Plotins Stellung zum Gnosticismus und kirchlichen Christentum*, Leipzig, 1901 (*Texte und Untersuchungen*, XX, 4); Bidez, *Vie de Porphyre*, Ghent, 1913. The chief work for the period we are considering here is the treatise of Plotinus "Against those who say that the demiurge of the world is wicked, and that the world is evil" (*Enn.*, II, ix). The work in fifteen books composed by Porphyry against the Christians is lost; we know some of his arguments through the refutation by Macarius Magnes, ed. Blondel, Paris, 1876. Cf. P. de Labriolle, *La Réaction païenne*, Paris, 1934, pp. 223-296.



The antagonism which usually<sup>2</sup> existed between the two doctrines and their adherents was not apparent in the very early years of Neo-Platonism. Origen attended the lectures of Ammonius, and Porphyry reproached him later on for having deserted hellenism, and living according to Christian laws while continuing to think as a Greek.<sup>3</sup> We shall return later on to this passage of Porphyry, and point out its errors and injustice. It interests us now mainly as a reminder of the time when Ammonius and Origen worked together; it also makes us realise what a redoubtable adversary Neoplatonism recognised in the Christian master of Alexandria.<sup>4</sup>

Origen had already left Alexandria when Plotinus arrived there, about 233.<sup>5</sup> He listened to various masters there, but none satisfied him. A friend took him to Ammonius. "Here is the man I have been looking for," cried Plotinus, and he attended his lectures for eleven years. In 244, on the death of Ammonius, desiring to study the philosophy taught in Persia and the Indies, he followed the emperor Gordian who was setting out on an expedition against the Persians. This expedition ended in disaster: Plotinus escaped with great difficulty, first to Antioch, and then to Rome, where he stayed; he was then forty years old. That was in the first year of the reign of Philip the Arabian (244-249). Plotinus found once more at Rome the Christian Church which he had come to know at Alexandria. It enjoyed the complete favour of the emperor, and its bishop was so powerful that Decius said after the martyrdom of Fabian in 250 that he would rather tolerate at Rome a pretender to the Empire than a bishop of the Christians.<sup>6</sup> We have already spoken of the terrible persecution by which the new emperor tried then to destroy this Church which he found so formidable.<sup>7</sup>

It was amid these tempests that the school of Plotinus came into

<sup>2</sup> This opposition never prevented contacts nor even borrowings: it is enough to recall here Marius Victorinus in the West, and in the East pseudo-Dionysius; and the Neoplatonists, as much as and even more than Christians, borrowed from their opponents. These borrowings are particularly evident in Proclus, for instance in his angelology and in his theology of prayer.

<sup>3</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xix, 7, Cf. Bk. IV.

<sup>4</sup> Origen was not the only Christian among those who heard Ammonius: he had been preceded by Heraclas (*Hist. eccles.*, VI, xix, 13). Cf. Bk. IV.

<sup>5</sup> Plotinus was born at Lycopolis (Assiut) about 205; he was 28 years old when he went to study at Alexandria. Cf. his *Life* by Porphyry, ii-iii.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 852.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *supra*, pp. 791 *et seq.*

existence at Rome. The master was not a persecutor,<sup>8</sup> but he was a fervent adherent of hellenism; in the bitter struggle which was going on around him he considered that he had a part to play, and was conscious of its importance. For the rest, philosophy was not for him pure speculation: the religious enthusiasm with which he had given himself up to Ammonius had increased in the course of his meditations and his teaching; he regarded himself, like the initiates into the Mysteries, as the depositary of a secret. For a long time he refused to make known the teachings of his master; when other disciples of Ammonius violated the secret to which all had bound themselves, Plotinus regarded himself as freed from his promise,<sup>9</sup> and shortly afterwards he began to write. Even so, at that moment his compositions made no pretence at literary form, and were merely scholastic discussions communicated to a few confidants.<sup>10</sup> He aimed at a sort of ideal city, a Platonopolis, which he hoped to found in Campania thanks to the support of the emperor Gallienus and his wife Salonina.<sup>11</sup>

### *The Treatise Against the Gnostics*

Nevertheless Plotinus realised that his authority was opposed, even within his own circle, by rival influences. Some contrasted him with Numenius, even accusing him of having plagiarised this writer;<sup>12</sup> others were Christians, "sectaries who had departed from the ancient philosophy." "They have deceived many people, because they have deceived themselves, and think that Plato did not penetrate completely to the intelligible essence. Plotinus refuted them often in his lectures, and wrote a treatise which I have called *Against the Gnostics*; he left us the rest to examine."<sup>13</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Schmidt (*op. cit.*, p. 12) even thinks that Gallienus's edict of toleration and his letter to the Egyptian bishops were due to the influence of Plotinus, but this seems a gratuitous supposition.

<sup>9</sup> *Vita Plotini*, iii.

<sup>10</sup> "In the tenth year of Gallienus (264), when I became acquainted with him, he had written twenty-one works. I possessed these treatises, which were entrusted only to a small number of people; it was not then easy to get these entrusted to one, or to find out about them; it was neither simple nor easy, and the receivers of the books were carefully chosen" (*Vita*, iv).

<sup>11</sup> *Vita*, v.

<sup>12</sup> Amelius replied to them in a work on *The Difference between the doctrines of Plotinus and of Numenius* (*Vita*, xvii).

<sup>13</sup> *Vita*, xvi. These sectaries, who were Gnostics, relied on many writings, and in particular on apocalypses; Porphyry replied to the *Apocalypse* of Zoroaster. Cf. *infra*, p. 887, n. 20.

This treatise of Plotinus is a most important document for the religious history of the third century. No other work brings out so plainly the antagonism between hellenism and Christianity. True, the Christianity which Plotinus here attacks is mingled with a Gnostic mythology which the Church has always rejected; but what the philosopher rejects with most force are not the imaginations and magical rites of the Gnostics but their conception of the world, of man, and salvation, and in its essential features this conception is a Christian one.<sup>14</sup>

The opponents Plotinus had in mind had adhered to Gnostic doctrines before coming to hear his lectures. He was not able to detach them from these doctrines, to his very great regret. "But it is to my own disciples and not to those others that I address these discourses" (x, 8). These latter make use of the books of ancient writers, and especially of Plato, without understanding them:

Coming after the ancients, they have taken from them many things, but have made unseemly additions, in order to contradict them; they ascribe to the Intelligible generations and corruptions of every kind; they condemn the visible universe; they regard the union of soul and body as a fault; they criticise the Governor of the universe, they identify the Demiurge with the soul, and attribute to it the same passions as those of individual souls (vi, 55).

Their imaginings are words devoid of meaning; "they are inventions of people who are not attached to the old hellenic culture" (vi, 6).

Leaving aside those features which are specially Gnostic,<sup>15</sup> we notice above all the idea of the world, its unity, and its origin.

<sup>14</sup> This is pointed out by E. Bréhier in his edition of the *Enneades*, II, p. 108: "For the rest, what Plotinus criticises above all in them (the Gnostics) is the fundamentally anti-hellenic character of their teaching, and, we might say, its Christian character." He concludes by insisting (pp. 109-110) on the bearing of this controversy: "This treatise has therefore a profound significance which in interest greatly surpasses the historical occasion which gave rise to it. It is one of the finest and proudest protests on the part of hellenic rationalism against the religious individualism which at that time was invading the greco-roman world . . ." We are unable to subscribe to this eulogy, but we ourselves regard this treatise of Plotinus as manifesting the reaction of hellenism against Christianity.

<sup>15</sup> The emanations are not such as they imagine them to be, but necessary and eternal (iii); their idea of the fall of the soul cannot be sustained (iv, x), the same is true of their magic (xiv), and their conception of illumination in darkness (xii).

"This world did not begin, and will not end" (vii, 1). "To ask why the world was made is to ask why there is a soul, or why the Demiurge produces. It thus amounts to positing a beginning of that which has always been, and then to think that he became the cause of his work, after himself changing and undergoing modifications" (viii, 1). The visible world is not to be despised; it is the one image, as perfect as may be, of the intelligible world.<sup>16</sup>

The most beautiful and most divine things in this visible world are the stars; to deny the intelligence of the sun is a manifest absurdity (v, 1-15). "Why attribute to ourselves a wisdom higher than theirs? How admit this, without being fools?" (viii, 38). "The souls of the stars have much more intelligence and goodness, and closer contact with the intelligible realities than our own" (xvi, 9). "There are people who do not object to calling brethren the most vile of mankind, but they will not deign to give this name to the sun, or the stars in the heavens, or even to the soul of the world" (xviii, 17; cf. xxxvii).

Also, from the moral point of view, this world is good. There are certainly defects in it, but a wise man knows how to deal with these:

One man is a murderer, another, through frailty, is overcome by pleasure: there is nothing astonishing in these faults, which arise not from intelligence, but in childish and puerile souls. If there is a struggle, and if there are conquerors, is it not plain that this is very good? If someone does wrong to you, is this terrible for the immortal part of your being? Another murders you: but that is precisely what you would wish. Moreover, if you complain so much of this world, you are not obliged to remain a citizen of it (ix, 11-17).

To these commonplaces of Stoicism, Plotinus adds the theory of previous existences: "The gods, as it has been said, will be easily acquitted by men . . . since they give to each one, in the alter-

<sup>16</sup> "Again, it cannot be allowed that this world is an evil production because it contains many things which go wrong; that would be to give too high a value to it, and to think that it is identical with the intelligible world, whereas it is only an image of it. And what image could be more beautiful? What other fire than ours could be a better image of the intelligible fire? And after the intelligible earth, is there an earth superior to ours? Is there a more perfect sphere, endowed with a more regular movement, apart from the extension of the intelligible world in itself? Is there, after the intelligible sun, anything superior to the visible sun?" (iv, 22). Cf. viii, 16; xvi, 1; xvii, 1.

nating succession of his lives, the destiny which is fitting for him and which is the result of his previous lives" (*Ibid.*, 22-25).

The multiplicity of deities contributes to the beauty of this universe:

After the happy soul, we must celebrate the intelligible gods, and above them all, the great king of the intelligible beings, whose greatness is manifested even by the plurality of the gods. As the Divinity is not restricted to one only being, but is shown to be as multiple as God effectively manifests to us, we come to know the power of God, which, while remaining identical with itself, is capable of producing the manifold deities who are connected with Him, exist by Him, and come from Him (*Ibid.*, 32-39).

In presence of all these beings which are superior to us, we must not dream of privileged relations with God, but just keep in our own place:

This visible world is likewise made by God and looks towards Him, as do all the gods, which all make known to man, by prophecy and oracle, that which has affinity with them. That they are not the supreme God himself is of course quite obvious, but if you are going to despise them, or boast of not being inferior to them, I will say to you, in the first place, that the better anyone is, the more benevolent he is towards all beings, and towards all men. Moreover, we must consider ourselves with moderation, without grossness, and without raising ourselves higher than our nature can put us. We must realise that there is room for others near to God; we must not put only ourselves next to Him, or by approaching to Him in a dream, deprive ourselves of becoming divine so far as this is possible for a human soul. This is possible to a soul in the measure in which it is guided by intelligence; to go beyond intelligence is to cause it to fall. . . . Great is the presumption of men, though previously humble, modest and ordinary layfolk, when they hear it said: "Thou art a son of God; the others, whom thou hast admired so much, are not sons of God, not even the stars which have been traditionally honoured; thou art thyself, without effort, superior even to the heavens." And then the others applaud (*Ibid.*, 39-60).

Such men think themselves to be the object of a special providence, and forget that Providence is universal and extends to all beings:

If God exerts his providence in your favour, why should He neglect the world as a whole, in which you are? . . . You will perhaps say

that men do not need that God should have regard to the world. Perhaps not—but the world has need of God. . . . (*Ibid.*, 64-70).

Can the denial that Providence extends to this world and to all things be reconciled with piety? Is one who denies it consistent with himself? For they maintain that Providence is exerted solely in their favour: was this when they were up above, or now that they are down here? In the former case, how is it they have come down here? In the latter case, how is it that they remain here below? How is it that God himself is not here below? If He is not here, how does He know that they are here? How does He know whether in their stay here below they have not forgotten Him or whether they have not become wicked? . . . (xvi, 14-22).

Whether Providence extends in fact from below to yourselves, or whether it is as you think, the world contains in any case something which comes from God; it has not been abandoned by Him and never will be. Providence watches over the whole, even more than over the parts, and the soul of the whole shares in it more than others; this is proved by the fact of existence, and of existence accompanied by wisdom. Has one of these foolish men, who think themselves to be above wisdom, the beautiful regularity and wisdom of the universe? Such a comparison is ridiculous and out of place, and if it were not required by the discussion, one would not be exempt from impiety (*Ibid.*, 27-36).

A last reproach, but not the least serious, was that Christians have no moral science:

They have no doctrine concerning virtue; they have left this matter wholly on one side; they do not say what it is, nor how many virtues there are; they are ignorant of the studies of the ancients, so numerous and so beautiful; they do not show how one acquires virtue, how one possesses it, and how one cures and purifies the soul. It is quite superfluous to say: "Look towards God," if they do not teach how we are to look. For someone might say: "What is there to prevent us looking towards God without abstaining from any pleasure and without repressing anger? What is there to prevent us always recurring to the name of God, while remaining governed by the passions, and making no attempt to be free from them?" It is the progress of virtue within the soul, accompanied by prudence, that enables us to see God: without true virtue, God is but a word (xv, 28-40).

The opposition between the two philosophies is thus summed up by Plotinus:

The philosophy which we aim at makes manifest with all other goods, the simplicity of morals and the purity of thoughts; it aims at gravity and not arrogance; the confidence it engenders in ourselves is accompanied by reason, assurance, and also by prudence and an extreme circumspection. The other doctrine is set forward in complete opposition to ours. And I do not wish to speak of it any more (xiv, 38-45).

This treatise, which we can date in the year 264,<sup>17</sup> is not the only one which manifests polemical preoccupations;<sup>18</sup> but nowhere else do they dominate a whole treatise as they do here, and it is this that gives this work its unusual interest. No other document of this period throws so strong a light on the conflict between Christianity and hellenism. This whole period is so far removed from us in time that, if we read only the Christian writers, we fail to understand the force of the opposition these had to encounter, not only from the statesmen and people in general, but even from the most distinguished and most reflective minds. This religion of the world, the sun, and stars, which Julian will do his best to revive a century later, will then be exhausted and collapse upon him with all its weight, but in 260 in the time of Plotinus, it was still living and powerful. The world was regarded as full of gods, who are taught by tradition, recognised by philosophers, and sincerely revered by pious pagans. To regard oneself as the object of a special providence of God, or as his child, more dear to Him than the sun and the stars, was for Plotinus an absurdity which does not even admit of discussion.<sup>19</sup> And then these common folk, who come from the people, and have never studied ethics, lay claim to virtue, and think that prayer and the love of God suffice for it!

When Plotinus waxed so indignant, some twenty years had passed since Origen had answered Celsus. His reply did not affect Plotinus; the latter knew Christianity only as deformed by Gnos-

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Schmidt, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

<sup>18</sup> Traces are to be found in *Enn.*, II, 1, 4, 14-33; III, vii, 13, 49-53; III, ii, 8, 20-41; III, ii, 9, 10-19. Cf. Schmidt, *op. cit.*, pp. 68-81. On the common attacks against Gnostics and Christians, cf. *ibid.*, pp. 82 *et seq.*

<sup>19</sup> To rebut Plotinus, it suffices to repeat the statement of St. John of the Cross: "One single human thought is worth more than the whole world; hence only God can be worthy of it" (*Aphorisms*, ed. Baruzi, pp. 16-17).

ticism, just as in the next century Julian saw it only through Arianism.<sup>20</sup>

## Porphyry

Plotinus was content to point out the fundamental opposition between hellenic thought and Christian gnosis: Porphyry was to renew the fight and to carry it on to the bitter end.<sup>21</sup>

Was Porphyry born in Christian circles? The historian Socrates says so, but it is very doubtful if he is right.<sup>22</sup> What is certain is merely that, being born or at least brought up at Tyre,<sup>23</sup> he met Origen<sup>24</sup> when a young man, and was acquainted with Christianity, then very flourishing on the Phœnician coast. His curiosity, which was very great, was directed towards all the oriental religions which were at that time springing up around him;<sup>25</sup> Christianity seems also to have attracted him, and it was possibly for some time the subject of his sympathetic study.<sup>26</sup>

But all this quickly vanished; at the end of 249, Philip the Arabian was killed by Decius, and the imperial favour was succeeded by persecution. War was declared between the two sides,

<sup>20</sup> Plotinus was not content merely to write against the Gnostics himself; he directed the labours of his disciples in the same sense: "He left us," says Porphyry, "the rest to examine. Amelius wrote as many as forty books against the book of Zostrienus. I myself made numerous criticisms of the book of Zoroaster; I showed that it was a recent apocryphal work, fabricated by the founders of the sect in order to persuade people that the doctrines they were advancing were really those of the ancient Zoroaster" (*Vita*, xvi).

<sup>21</sup> Cf. J. Bidez, *Vie de Porphyre*, Ghent, 1913; P. de Labriolle, *La réaction païenne*, pp. 231-296.

<sup>22</sup> Socrates, *Historia ecclesiastica*, III, xxiii, 37. Cf. Bidez, *op. cit.*, p. 7; P. de Labriolle, *op. cit.*, p. 231.

<sup>23</sup> In 232-233.

<sup>24</sup> Origen himself says so in a text quoted by Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xix, 5.

<sup>25</sup> "He liked to speak the idiom of his country, and perhaps prided himself on understanding Hebrew. He was versed in the mysteries of Chaldea, Persia and Egypt. We find him describing and interpreting a hieroglyph, and dealing with the sacred and profane literature of the Jews and the Phœnicians. India itself had attracted his curiosity, and he was the one consulted in order to prove the non-authentic character of certain Gnostic writings put forth under the name of Zoroaster" (Bidez, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-10).

<sup>26</sup> Bidez writes, though not without some exaggeration (*op. cit.*, p. 13): "His gentle and delicate nature could not fail to be attracted by the nobility and infinite goodness of the words of Jesus; he realised their beauty, just as he understood the greatness of the Bible. For a long while he retained a sincere veneration for the person of Christ."



and Porphyry openly sided with the Empire and its gods. He was still young when he wrote his *Treatise on the Oracles*, in which Geffcken finds "the most abominable superstition."<sup>27</sup> He did not only write: he tells us that one day he expelled from a bath a demon called Causatha by the people of the neighbourhood.<sup>28</sup>

In 263, when thirty years old, Porphyry was at Rome, and there joined himself to Plotinus. This connection had a decisive influence on his life and thought. We recall the attraction which the Platonist philosophy had for Justin: "The understanding of incorporeal things captivated me very greatly, the contemplation of the ideas gave wings to my thought; after a little while I thought I had become a wise man; I was even foolish enough to hope that I was going immediately to see God, for such is the aim of the philosophy of Plato" (*Dial.*, ii, 6).

These religious aspirations were still more pressing in the school of Plotinus, and as a result of his contact with it, Porphyry himself writes as follows in the *Life* of his master:

Thanks to this daemonic illumination, which often ascends through the Intelligence up to the first god and beyond, following the method laid down by Plato in his Banquet, Plotinus saw God, who has neither form nor essence because He is beyond the intelligence and the intelligible. This God I for my part approached and became united with only once, when I was in my sixty-eighth year. But Plotinus had a very close vision of the end. For him, the end was the intimate union with the God who is above all things. While I was with him, he four times attained this end, thanks to an ineffable act, and not in potency. The oracle says that often the gods straighten one's straying path, in order to enable us to see the radiance of their light.<sup>29</sup>

This ardent tension exhausted the nervous energy of Porphyry. He contemplated suicide. Plotinus, in whose house he lodged, perceived this. "He told me that my desire to commit suicide was in no way reasonable, but resulted from an unhealthy melancholia, and urged me to travel" (*Ibid.*, xi). That was in the fifteenth year of the reign of Gallienus, in 268 (*Ibid.*, vi). Porphyry withdrew to Lilybaeum in Sicily. He never saw Plotinus again, but the

<sup>27</sup> *Ausgang des Heidentums*, p. 59, quoted by P. de Labriolle, *op. cit.*, p. 233. This judgment may be confirmed by reading the chapter which Bidez devotes to this treatise, and the fragments he quotes from it (*op. cit.*, pp. 17-28).

<sup>28</sup> Bidez, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

<sup>29</sup> *Life of Plotinus*, xxiii.

latter continued to send him the rest of his *Enneades* (*Ibid.*, vi). In 270, Plotinus died. Longinus the rhetorician, who had previously been Plotinus's master, left Athens, which had just been pillaged by the Goths, and went to Palmyra, to Queen Zenobia. He asked Porphyry to go to him, requesting him to bring books with him (*Ibid.*, xix). Porphyry remained in Sicily, and in 272, Aurelian, who had vanquished Zenobia, had her advisers executed, among them being Longinus.

In Sicily, Porphyry gradually recovered from his neurasthenia. Meanwhile he occupied his time in popularising philosophy, and especially Aristotle's Logic.<sup>30</sup> Very soon he returned to the anti-Christian polemics in which Plotinus had involved him. Aurelian on his return from the East contemplated introducing into Rome the cult of the Sun and making it the sole religion of the whole Empire. In 274 he built on the Quirinal a magnificent temple to the "Invincible Sun." It was in these circumstances that Porphyry wrote his fifteen books *Against the Christians*.<sup>31</sup>

### *The Work Against the Christians*

In the fourth and fifth centuries, this work was on several occasions proscribed by the Christian emperors. It perished, but only after it had long moved public opinion. It was answered by Method of Olympus, Eusebius, Apollinarius of Laodicea, and by Macarius Magnes. The work of the last-mentioned is the only one which has come down to us, and even this is incomplete.<sup>32</sup> The discussion by Macarius Magnes is our best source for the arguments put forward by Porphyry.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>30</sup> "Chrysaorios, a senator to whom he had previously given lessons in Rome, tried one day to read Aristotle's *Categories*, but he could not understand them at all. In his difficulty he wrote to Porphyry," who composed the *Isagoge*. This little treatise was to make Porphyry's reputation. Cf. Bidez, *op. cit.*, pp. 60 *et seq.*

<sup>31</sup> Bidez, *op. cit.*, p. 67; P. de Labriolle, *op. cit.*, p. 242.

<sup>32</sup> *Macarii Magnetis quae supersunt ex inedito codice*, edidit C. Blondel, Paris, 1876. The work comprised five books; the manuscript edited by Blondel began with ch. 7 of Book II, and ended suddenly in the middle of a word, in ch. 30 (the last) of Book IV.

[An English translation, with introduction by T. W. Crafer, D.D., was published in the *Translations of Christian Literature* by the S.P.C.K. in 1919. It includes a short passage from Book V.—Tr.]

<sup>33</sup> The fragments of Porphyry have been collected by Harnack, *Porphyrius gegen die Christen*, 15 Bücher, Zeugnisse, Fragmente und Referate, in *Abhandlungen* of the Berlin Academy, 1916. To these must be added five Fragments

This reasoning is quite different in character from that of Plotinus; it is not now the defence of a philosophical thesis, but a philological or historical controversy. We see here the influence of Longinus even more than that of Plotinus. The account of the Passion makes Porphyry angry, as it did Celsus.<sup>34</sup> Like the Pharisees, he demands great public miracles.<sup>35</sup> Above all, he emphasises the divergences in the Gospel narratives.<sup>36</sup> Often his objections are only quibbles, but sometimes he calls attention to real difficulties.<sup>37</sup>

This controversy is related to that which the Marcionites were then waging against the Old Testament. It might be troublesome, but was not decisive, and threw no light on the question it discussed.

Porphyry had a sharp but not very powerful mind, and has left the memory of a determined and clever controversialist, but his influence, in contrast to that of Plotinus, was purely negative.<sup>38</sup> After his time, the Neo-Platonist school continued its speculations, and also its mystical efforts and its theurgy. With Jamblichus and, above all, Proclus, it was influenced by Christianity on more than one point, and at the same time reacted upon Christianity, as we see in the work of pseudo-Dionysius. As for the effort of Aurelian to group all the forces of hellenism in the cult of the *Sol invictus*, this will be taken up again a century later by Julian the Apostate.

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transcribed by Feuardent in his edition of Irenæus, III, iii, 4 (Migne, P.G., Vol. V, col. 1925; Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, Vol. II, 3, pp. 421-422; Funk-Diekamp, *PP. Apostolici*, Vol. VII, 1913, pp. 377-401).

<sup>34</sup> Macarius Magnes, III, i.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, III, xviii.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, II, xii.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. P. de Labriolle, *op. cit.*, pp. 252-270.

<sup>38</sup> On the letter to Marcella, cf. A. Bremond, in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XXIII, 1933, pp. 106-112.

# THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL AT ALEXANDRIA BEFORE ORIGEN<sup>1</sup>

## § 1. THE BEGINNINGS

### *Alexandria*

IN THE first centuries of the Christian era, Alexandria was one of the greatest cities of the Empire, and a rival to Rome and Antioch. Of recent foundation, and consequently without traditions, it was the centre of hellenic commerce in the Mediterranean, and also the open door to that mysterious country of Egypt, whose age-long traditions had such an attraction for the Greek mind. By reason of the mildness of its climate it attracted a distinguished colony; sufferers from phthisis went there to seek health; others, much more numerous, were attracted by the life of pleasure its inhabitants led.<sup>2</sup>

On the confines of two civilisations, Alexandria united hellenic elegance with Egyptian mystery. Even to-day, in the few monuments which remain of the old city, one is surprised to find a combination of Greek and Egyptian art which is not to be found elsewhere.<sup>3</sup>

In this cosmopolitan city, in which life was so pleasant, all the cults seemed to be combined in a complaisant Syncretism, and a visitor found there nought but toleration and freedom.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bibliography.—C. Bigg, *The Christian Platonists of Alexandria*, Oxford, 1886; W. Bousset, *Jüdisch-Christlicher Schulbetrieb in Alexandria und Rom*, Göttingen, 1915.

<sup>2</sup> Celsus, *De re medica*, III, 22; Pliny, *Epist.*, V, 19; Leclercq, article *Alexandrie* in *Dict. d'Archéologie chrét.*, col. 1101.

<sup>3</sup> This is particularly the case in the catacomb of Kom-el-Chougafa, in which we find Anubis, the Egyptian god with the head of a jackal, placed on a tomb and surrounded by hellenic garlands. If we ascend the Nile valley, we no longer find, even in the monuments of the Ptolemaic and Roman period, any like traces of Greek influence.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. the letter of the Emperor Hadrian to Servianus (*Hist. Aug., Saturninus*, VIII, 11). The authenticity of this letter is disputed, but seems very probable. The emperor describes with contemptuous irony the versatility of the Alexandrians: "the patriarch of the Jews, when he came to Alexandria, found himself

But beneath this apparent toleration there slept violent passions. In 216, when Origen was a young man, a riot broke out. Caracalla summoned the populace to the gymnasium, caused the strong men to be enrolled for military service, and then had them massacred; he lodged his soldiers with the inhabitants with orders to kill their hosts, and this was carried out.<sup>5</sup> In 249, in the reign of Philip the Arabian, a prince who was nevertheless very favourably disposed to Christians, a riot led to a rising of the whole populace against the Christians, which caused such violence that they were massacred, their houses pillaged, and their belongings burnt.<sup>6</sup> These outbursts, which will often recur in the fourth century, must at least be mentioned here. The easy and attractive life which Alexandria presented at first sight concealed dormant savage passions which could be terrible when they awoke. In the time of the Ptolemies Alexandria was called "the aviary of the Muses," but it was sometimes more like a menagerie of wild beasts.

### *Origin of the School of Alexandria*

The School of Alexandria is well known to us only from the time of Clement. St. Jerome attributes its commencement to St. Mark himself.<sup>7</sup> Without attaching too much importance to this unsupported statement, we may remark that even before the establishment of Christianity in Alexandria, the city was famous for its schools. The pagans had there the Museum, founded by Ptolemy, and also the Serapeum; the Jews, who were very numerous, likewise had their schools. Hence it is natural that Christians should wish to have there a centre of religious instruction. At Rome we have met with the school of St. Justin;<sup>8</sup> the martyred philosopher was succeeded by Tatian, and then by Rhodon. But this Roman school seems to have been purely private in character, and to have

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constrained to adore the Christ and Serapis, and those who call themselves Christian bishops are at the same time devotees of Serapis."

<sup>5</sup> *Hist. August., Spartianus*, VI.

<sup>6</sup> These facts are related in detail by Bishop Dionysius in a letter to Fabius of Antioch (*Eusebius, Hist. eccles.*, VI, xli, 1-9). In the fourth century, the Arian bishop George will likewise be put to death by the populace, and also the philosopher Hypatia. Under Theodosius the same fate befell the prisoners of the Serapeum.

<sup>7</sup> *De viris illustribus*, xxxvi. In connection with Pantaenus, he tells us of a "very ancient custom," by which, "from the time of Mark the evangelist, there were at Alexandria ecclesiastical doctors."

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *supra*, Bk. II, p. 545.

had a very modest development. At Alexandria the school was more closely linked with the episcopate, at least from the third century, and had a much wider influence. Its heads were successively: Pantaenus, Clement, Origen, Heraclas, Alexander, Dionysius, Pierius, Theognostus, Peter, Macarius, and then in the fourth century Didymus the Blind, and lastly Rhodon, who in 405 migrated to Sidon in Pamphilia.

This succession of masters testifies to the continued existence of the school, but we must not think of it after the fashion of our modern universities, or even of the Museum at Alexandria. The Christian School had no rich endowment. A wealthy friend, Ambrose, had to provide Origen with the copies of which he had need; from his own disciples, even the rich, Origen did not wish to take anything. Neither was there any building belonging to the school; the master taught where he lived. He was usually the sole lecturer; sometimes he was assisted by an auxiliary who took over part of the teaching. Thus Heraclas was assistant to Origen during the last years of the latter's stay in Alexandria. Again, the teaching was not exclusively religious; it was no longer a mere apologetical preparation, like the teaching of Justin at Rome; it was an encyclopædic teaching, presenting in the first place the whole series of profane sciences, and then rising to moral and religious philosophy, and finally to Christian theology, set forth in the form of a commentary on the sacred books. This encyclopædic conception of teaching was an Alexandrian tradition, and was found also in the Museum and in the Jewish school. It had the drawback that it required in the master a universal knowledge which could in some matters only amount to a superficial assimilation. On the other hand, it assured the continuity of the intellectual formation, wholly supervised, as it was, by one and the same master, and tending, through all the human and divine sciences, to the one end, the knowledge of God. When Origen was the master, he was able to bring to his task a great capacity for work, an exceptional ease in assimilation, and above all, a luminous and rich mind, and the influence of such a formation must have been very great indeed.

### *Pantaenus*

The first master of the School of Alexandria known to us is Pantaenus. In his *Stromata*, Clement recalls the memory of the "blessed persons, worthy to be remembered, whom he had the

good fortune to hear." The first ones are vaguely described, and cannot be identified. "But the last, whom I met by chance, was indeed the first in merit. I finally found him in Egypt, where he was hidden. He was indeed like the Sicilian bee and, having feasted on the flowers of the field in the prophets and the apostles, he deposited in the souls of his hearers an incorruptible treasure of knowledge. These men, moreover, retained the true tradition of holy teaching which came directly from the holy apostles, Peter and James, John and Paul, as a son receives an inheritance from his father."<sup>9</sup>

The School of Alexandria cannot as yet have been very well known, seeing that it was only by chance that Clement discovered Pantaenus, this "excellent master who had hidden himself in Egypt," and to whom Clement henceforth attached himself.<sup>10</sup>

## § 2. CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA<sup>1</sup>

### *Life of Clement*

Clement is a Christian writer who is more attractive when viewed at a distance: a closer study is rather disconcerting. He had

<sup>9</sup> *Strom.*, I, xi, 1-3, quoted in part by Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, V, xi, 3-5. To these memories Eusebius adds (V, x, 2) a few traditions which he sets forth with reserve: "It is said that he displayed such ardour and so courageous a love for the divine word that he became a distinguished preacher of the Gospel of Christ to the nations of the East and that he even went as far as the Indies. . . ." Jerome copies Eusebius, with some abridgment; he adds that Pantaenus taught under Severus and Caracalla (*De viris illustribus*, xxxvi), but that is certainly an anachronism.

<sup>10</sup> We would like to know more about the teaching of Pantaenus. Bousset thought he could detect it in passages in certain of Clement's books. It has long been noted that the eighth book of the *Stromata* is only a collection of notes which Clement had made for other use. The *Excerpta* and the *Eclogae* have the same character: they are not finished works, but dossiers and collections of notes gathered together by Clement, either in the course of his reading, or, if we are to believe Bousset, when hearing the lectures of Pantaenus. In the *Stromata*, I-VII, Bousset also finds unconnected portions, fragments of previous teaching or works. Cf. W. Bousset, *Jüdisch-Christlicher Schulbetrieb in Alexandria und Rom*, Göttingen, 1915, pp. 155-271. These researches, carried through with much labour, provide the basis for ingenious hypotheses, but such weak foundations can hardly support an historic certainty. Cf. J. Munck, *Untersuchungen über Klemens von Alexandria*, Stuttgart, 1933, pp. 151-185. The author thus concludes his discussion on Bousset's conjectures: "Concerning Pantaenus we can only make hypotheses; if we must say something of him, it will be that what Clement was, Pantaenus was before him" (p. 184). Cf. Casey, *The Excerpta ex Theodoto*, pp. 5-16, and *infra*, p. 899, n. 21.

<sup>1</sup> Editions: Migne, P.G., Vols. VIII and IX, reproducing the Oxford edition of 1715; O. Staehlin, 3 vols. in the *Corpus* published by the Berlin Academy,

a wide outlook, and an ardent mind. He attracts us by his warm sympathy, his sincerity, and his zeal for the study of God and of the Word. But while he has the charm of the intuitionists, he also has their defects. He turns his mind to systematic and general questions, but is not very successful in analysing them, and allows himself to be led hither and thither by his impulses and reminiscences. If we add to this that his chief work, the *Stromata*, or Miscellanies, is unfinished, and that he deliberately sets out to perplex the reader, we shall understand what an effort is required on the part of one who wishes to study it. A critic who is one of the greatest admirers of the *Stromata* says this of it: "This work is perhaps the most important of all Christian writings of the second and third centuries, and at the same time there is not one that is more difficult."<sup>2</sup>

Clement appeared in the full light of history for only twenty or twenty-five years. He was born about 150, probably at Athens,<sup>3</sup> of pagan parents;<sup>4</sup> he has not given an account of his conversion.

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Leipzig, 1905-1909 (this is the text we use); Hort-Mayor in *Miscellanies Book VII*, London, 1902; R. P. Casey, *The Excerpta ex Theodota of Clement of Alexandria*, London, 1934. Studies: Mgr. Freppel, *Clément d'Alexandrie*, 2nd edn., Paris, 1865; E. de Faye, *Clément d'Alexandrie*, 2nd edn., Paris, 1906; R. B. Tolinton, *Clement of Alexandria: A Study in Christian Liberalism*, London, 1914, 2 vols.; J. Patrick, *Clement of Alexandria*, London, 1914; Bousset and Munck, works mentioned, p. 732, n. 2; G. Bardy, *Clément d'Alexandrie* (collection, *Moralistes chrétiens*, Paris, 1926; O. Staehlin, *Des Clement von Alexandria ausgewählte Schriften aus dem griechischen überetzt*, Munich, 1934, 2 vols., especially Introduction, Vol. I, pp. 9-68.

<sup>2</sup> E. de Faye, *op. cit.*, p. 45. Cf. Tillemont, *Saint Clément d'Alexandrie*, art. V, p. 194: "Blondel has made a long list of the places in which, in his opinion, Clement errs. . . . He claims that he had less judgment than memory, breadth of mind and erudition. Others consider that he is stronger on morals than on dogma, that he gives too much place to allegory, and writes almost always without order or sequence. It is certain that even in the *Stromata* there are many instances of false reasoning, and many things which are disturbing, either in their meaning or in the manner of expressing them. . . ." But, in the beginning of the next article, Tillemont remarks that "God judges us according to our hearts rather than according to our minds." And several saints have greatly praised Clement: Alexander of Jerusalem (*apud* Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xi); Jerome (*De viris illustribus*, xxxviii); Cyril of Alexandria (*In Julianum*, VI, in Migne, P.G., Vol. LXXVI, 813); Maximus the Confessor (*Disputatio cum Pyrrho*, in Migne, P.G., Vol. XCI, 317).

<sup>3</sup> Concerning the place of his birth there were already two traditions in the time of Epiphanius (*Haer.*, XXXII, vi), giving Athens or Alexandria. The second, doubtless, arose from his long stay in that city; the first agrees better with *Stromata*, I, xi.

<sup>4</sup> *Paedagogus*, I, i, 1; II, vii, 62; Eusebius, *Praep. evang.*, II, ii, 64.



We may with likelihood regard it as the end of a long search for God, similar to that described by Justin Martyr. For his works manifest an ardent desire for religious knowledge; the soul goes through the world seeking it from anyone who can offer it; finally Pantænus gives it to him.

These years of seeking left a deep impression on the mind of Clement. What we notice in him especially is the concern for tradition, and chiefly for oral tradition,<sup>5</sup> and in this respect, by his frequent repetition of the sayings of the presbyters,<sup>6</sup> he reminds us of Irenæus. We find in these two great Christians the same veneration in regard to the presbyters as witnesses of tradition, an agreement which is all the more remarkable in that their minds were so different. What Irenæus admired above all in this tradition was that it is the common good of all men, the one sun which enlightens all. Clement regards it above all as the sacred deposit which must be transmitted only to those who are worthy of it, and preferably by oral teaching, because to put it in writing involves the risk of profaning it.

To souls which are well prepared, the communication of knowledge or gnosis will be a revelation which will make them pass from sleep to full consciousness, from shadows to the light.<sup>7</sup> Clement

<sup>5</sup> *Eclogæ*, xxvii: "The presbyters did not write; they did not want the work of teaching the tradition to be embarrassed by the task of writing, and they did not wish to spend in writing the time they preferred to devote to preparing what they were to say. Perhaps also they were persuaded that the work of composition and that of teaching differ in nature, and they may have abandoned the former to those who were fitted for it." After thus pointing out the difference between the two, he speaks of the danger and of the necessity of writing: "The deposit transmitted by the presbyters who speak through writing makes use of the service of the scribe in order to extend tradition to others and to save those whom it reaches. Hence, just as a magnet, in presence of other matter, attracts only iron, by reason of the similitude of nature, so also books, although they reach many people, influence only those who are capable of understanding them. . . . A gnostic is far removed from envy! So he asks himself which is worse, to offer (knowledge) to one who is unworthy, or to refuse it to one who is worthy, and in his great love he prefers to run the risk of communicating it, not only to all those who can suitably receive it, but also sometimes to an unworthy person who insists on asking for it, not indeed because of this request—for he has no vanity—but because of the perseverance of the one who asks in this way, and who by doing so advances towards the faith." This theme is repeated by Clement in the *Stromata*, I, i-x; VII, x, 55, 6. Cf. on these, chs. xxvii-xxxvii of the *Excerpta*, Bousset, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

<sup>6</sup> The texts of Clement on the presbyters have been collected by Harnack, *Geschichte der Litteratur*, Vol. I, p. 192; cf. De Faye, *op. cit.*, p. 24, n. 1.

<sup>7</sup> *Eclogæ*, xxxv.

himself experienced this illumination more than once, and his whole ambition was to pass his life in this thrill, this exultation, this praise of God; an ambition which may sometimes have been mingled with illusion, but which nevertheless elevated to a high ideal the life of the Alexandrian master.

Clement doubtless commenced by assisting Pantaenus, and then took his place. His teaching seems to have lasted some fifteen years at the most. Begun about 190, it was stopped by the persecuting edict of Severus in 202.<sup>8</sup> About 211 we find him in retirement in Cappadocia near to Bishop Alexander, who had been his disciple and who always retained a fervent affection for him. Writing to the church of Antioch, Alexander sent his letter by Clement, and thus introduced him: "I send you this writing, my lords and brethren, by Clement, the holy priest and virtuous and esteemed person of whom you have heard and whom you know. His presence here has, according to the watchful providence of the Lord, fortified and increased the Church."<sup>9</sup>

We see from this testimony that Clement did not remain inactive in his exile; he carried on his sacerdotal ministry as a priest. But Cappadocia was not Alexandria; Clement did not find there a Catechetical School. These new conditions of a less active life, and one less charged with responsibilities, may explain the characteristics of the last two *Stromata* which were then composed: in these we find mystical aspirations, ardent but sometimes confused, very prominent, leading the soul towards a beatitude which the simple faithful do not know.

This last period was in any case a short one; towards 215 or 216 Alexander, who had become bishop of Jerusalem, wrote to Origen, and in doing so spoke of Clement as dead.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> We know that this edict forbade all conversions to Christianity (cf. p. 753); a school such as that of Clement must have been particularly affected.

<sup>9</sup> Quoted by Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xi, 6.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xiv, 8-9, quoted in Bk. IV. Clement was for a time the object of a local cultus. Cf. Tillemont, *op. cit.*, p. 195: "We have said that his feast was observed on December 4th in several martyrologies, and although his name is not included in the *Roman Martyrology* of Baronius, this has not prevented the use of some passages from his works in the Proper of the church of Paris, and even the attribution to him of the title of Saint. It is said that, although at Rome some surprise was manifested at this, very soon the authority of Usuard was accepted, and it was considered strange that Baronius had not included his name, seeing that the Martyrology of Usuard had long been the ordinary Martyrology of the Church, and was still in use in various places." The question was subsequently settled by Benedict XIV in his letter

*His Works*

The chief work of Clement is the trilogy consisting of the *Protrepticus*, the *Paedagogus*, and the *Stromata*. Before we deal with these three works, we must briefly mention the others, and first of all the homily *On the Salvation of the Rich*.<sup>11</sup> This short treatise is interesting because it brings before us, not the educator and philosopher who appears in the principal works, but the priest, careful for the salvation of his flock, and showing them the way. The most popular portion of this short composition is the account which concludes it, the story of St. John and the young robber.<sup>12</sup> With this homily we may link a fragment which has come down to us<sup>13</sup> of an *Exhortation to Patience*, addressed to the newly baptized.<sup>14</sup>

Clement had also written *Hypotyposes* or *Outlines*; these were allegorical commentaries on passages of the Old and New Testaments. These are extant only in fragments, found for the most part in quotations in Eusebius,<sup>15</sup> together with a longer portion on the Catholic epistles, which exists in a Latin translation.<sup>16</sup> Photius passed a very severe judgment on these *Hypotyposes*; he considered them blasphemous, and could not believe that they were really written by Clement.<sup>17</sup> Our own knowledge of these books is so imperfect that it is difficult for us to revise this judgment of Photius.<sup>18</sup>

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of July 1st, 1748, to the King of Portugal. He upheld the exclusion pronounced by Clement VIII at the request of Baronius, for three reasons: (*a*) one cannot prove the heroic character of his virtues; (*b*) there is no evidence of public cultus; (*c*) his doctrine, if not erroneous, is at least suspect on several points: "Quisquis, citra partium studia, maturo judicio secum expendat quae a nobis hucusque prolata sunt, profecto fateri cogitur Clementis Alexandrini doctrinam saltem suspectam esse de erroribus."

<sup>11</sup> It is usually known by its Latin title, *Quis dives salvetur*. Ed. by Staehlin, Vol. III, pp. 159-191; Migne, P.G., Vol. IX, 603-652. Its date is uncertain. Cf. edition of P. M. Barnard, in *Texts and Studies*, V, 2.

<sup>12</sup> Reproduced by Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, III, xxiii, 5; cf. Bardy, *op. cit.*, pp. 137-140.

<sup>13</sup> In a manuscript in the Escorial.

<sup>14</sup> Barnard, *op. cit.*, pp. 47 *et seq.*; ed. Staehlin, Vol. III, pp. 221-223; Bardy, *op. cit.*, pp. 236-240.

<sup>15</sup> Ed. Staehlin, Vol. III, pp. 195-202.

<sup>16</sup> This fragment is entitled: *Adumbrationes Clementis Alexandrini in Epistolas canonicas*. Ed. Staehlin, Vol. III, pp. 203-215; Zahn, *Forschungen zur Geschichte des N. T. Kanons*, Vol. III, pp. 134 *et seq.*

<sup>17</sup> *Codex 109-111* (Migne, P.G., Vol. CIII, 384-5).

<sup>18</sup> Zahn (*op. cit.*, pp. 138-147) maintains that the *Hypotyposes* have not been interpolated. We need only mention the names of other fragments *On the Pasch*

The works we have just mentioned are personal compositions, but the manuscripts of Clement also contain collections of materials from various sources gathered together with a view to future elaboration. Such is the work published under the title of the eighth book of *Stromata*,<sup>19</sup> and such also are the *Excerpta ex Theodoto* and the *Eclogae propheticae*.<sup>20</sup> These collections are of great interest: they introduce us to some forerunners of Clement.<sup>21</sup> Among the religious ideas put forward in these texts, there are some which Clement always rejects, as, for instance, that which represents God as a material being.<sup>22</sup> There are others which, although not explicitly condemned by Clement, always remained foreign to his thought, as for instance the Pythagorean fancy which sees everywhere the dualism of opposed male and female principles;<sup>23</sup> but there are also some themes which he often takes up and delights to develop; this applies particularly to the idea of the spiritual hierarchy of beings.<sup>24</sup> All this motley collection, in which side by side with high mystical aspirations we find gross materialistic conceptions, gives us some idea of the religious surroundings in which Clement grew up and passed his life.

### *The Trilogy*

In the trilogy formed by the *Protrepticus*, the *Paedagogus*, and the *Stromata*, Clement aims at a gradual formation of his disciples: "The heavenly guide, the Logos, is called *Protreptikos* or converter when he invites mankind to salvation. . . . But when he

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(ed. Staehlin, Vol. III, p. 216), *On the ecclesiastical canon* (*ibid.*, p. 218), *On Providence* (*ibid.*, p. 219), and fragments of letters (*ibid.*, p. 223).

<sup>19</sup> Ed. Staehlin, Vol. III, pp. 80-102; Migne, P.G., Vol. IX, pp. 557-602. Cf. above p. 894, n. 10.

<sup>20</sup> Ed. Staehlin, Vol. III, pp. 103-133, 135-155; Migne, P.G., Vol. IX, 681-697, 697-728. R. P. Casey, *The Excerpta ex Theodoto*, London, 1934.

<sup>21</sup> P. Collomp studied these collections in the *Revue de Philologie*, Vol. XXXVII, 1913, pp. 19-46. He investigated the sources, and succeeded in recognising a Jewish source, the influence of which can also be discerned in several passages in the *Clementine Homilies*. This inquiry has provided the starting point for the later researches of Bousset. His conclusions go much farther than those of Collomp, but they are less certain. Casey, *op. cit.*, pp. 5-16, rejects the hypotheses of Bousset, and attributes to Clement himself all that is not from Theodotus.

<sup>22</sup> *Excerpta*, x-xvi. Cf. Collomp, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, x-xxvii. Cf. Collomp, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-29.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, x-xii, xxvii; *Eclogae*, li-lviii. Cf. Collomp, *op. cit.*, pp. 22 *et seq.*; Bousset, *op. cit.*, p. 161 and pp. 190-192.

functions as a physician and a teacher . . . he will receive the name of *Pedagogue*. . . . The sick soul has need of a pedagogue, who will cure it of its passions; then, it needs a teacher or doctor, who will make it apt to know . . . the revelation of the Logos. Thus the Logos wishing to achieve our salvation step by step, follows an excellent method: he converts in the first place, then he disciplines, and finally he instructs.”<sup>25</sup>

The programme thus outlined indicates very well the constant preoccupation of Clement: the progressive initiation of souls. In his works he does not set out to satisfy curiosity, but to extend and perpetuate the educative action of the Catechetical School, i.e. first by freeing pagans from idolatry, then by forming them in Christian morals, and finally by instructing them in Christian doctrine. Of the wide programme thus outlined, the first two parts are dealt with in the *Protrepticus* and the *Paedagogus*; the third, at least in part, is dealt with in the *Stromata*.<sup>26</sup>

### *The Protrepticus*

Of the three works of the trilogy, the *Protrepticus* is the easiest to analyse. It is a warm exhortation to listen to the Word, the one Master.

According to an ancient legend, Eunomius of Locres was singing one day at Delphi before the assembled people; a string of his zither broke;

<sup>25</sup> *Paedagogus*, I, 1.

<sup>26</sup> This last point has been called in question by De Faye (*op. cit.*, ch. 4, *Le Maître*; ch. 6, *Du véritable caractère des Stromates*; Appendix II, *Du plan des Stromates*). According to him, the *Stromata* would be but a preparatory work, intended to remove the objections which folk of small culture raised against philosophy; and were to be followed by another work, the *Didascalía*, which was never written. It would seem that in this discussion De Faye attributes too much definiteness to Clement's thought. It may be that the *Stromata* are not the finished work which Clement had planned, but they are an outline of it. Cf. Prat, *Projets littéraires de Clément d'Alexandrie* in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XV, 1925, pp. 234-257, and especially pp. 238-241. The dates of these works are difficult to determine. Harnack (*Chronologie*, appendix, pp. 541 *et seq.*), correcting his text (pp. 9-11), thinks that the *Protrepticus* was written between 180 and 190, the *Stromata*, Books I-IV and the *Paedagogus* would belong somewhere between 190 and 202. Books V-VII of the *Stromata* would be subsequent to Clement's departure from Alexandria in 202. So also Bousset (*Schulbetrieb*, p. 218, n.). Tollinton (*op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 329-331) thinks, on the contrary, that the whole trilogy was composed at Alexandria, and the *Hypotyposes* would be later. Without in any way claiming to decide so obscure a question, we here adopt, as a hypothesis, the chronology of Harnack.

a grasshopper alighted on the instrument, and his singing replaced the music of the broken string. You believe in these fables, but you do not believe the truth which we announce to you. We tell you that Wisdom has come down from heaven, and extends to us his sovereign hand, which is intelligence, to save us. This is the harmony spread through the whole world, sounded forth from mankind through the Holy Spirit; the Logos himself is the perfect instrument of God. This saving chant sounded forth from the commencement, but in recent times it has made itself heard by taking a new name, the Christ, God and man. In this way, that which pre-existed has been manifested; the Demiurge appears as our Teacher, he will vivify as God.

After this brilliant introduction, Clement passes on to a criticism of polytheism, the mysteries, sacrifices, and idols (chs. ii-vii). At the same time, he recognises that there are some truths in the philosophers, and especially in Plato. These come from a divine source, and also by borrowing from the Jews. The poets have likewise received some inspirations from the divine Logos.

The exhortation continues, pressing and ardent:

If the sun did not exist, night would be everywhere, in spite of the other stars. Similarly, if we did not know the Logos, and He did not enlighten us, we should be no better than chickens fattened in darkness and destined for the spit. Let us receive the light, in order to receive God; let us receive the light and become the disciples of the Lord. He made this promise to the Father: "I will publish thy name among my brethren, I will praise thee in the assembly." Yes, celebrate thy Father, O Word, make me to know God! Thy revelations save: thy chants will teach me, for until this day I have wandered about seeking God. And, Lord, as thou enlightenest me, and as, thanks to thee, I find God and receive the Father, I become thy co-heir, for Thou hast not been ashamed of thy brother.<sup>27</sup>

This rapid outline brings out the charm of Clement's works: they manifest a moving and tender piety, and at the same time an enthusiastic zeal. His great preoccupation is moral formation. Like Justin, he sees in Jesus the Logos, our sole Master. Justin asked Him above all for revelation; Clement seeks from him total conversion. He looks for this to Him and to Him alone; thus Christianity has over all philosophy and every other religion a transcendence which is self-evident for Clement.<sup>28</sup> It is this very

<sup>27</sup> *Protrepticus*, xi, 113, 3-5. Cf. De Faye, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. De Faye, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

profound and sincere Christianity that attracts us to-day in the *Protrepticus*; the ivy and thyrsus are now only faded decorations, but these exhortations are always earnest and affecting as they were when first written.

### *The Paedagogus*

The *Protrepticus* is the most sober and best constructed of all Clement's writings. The others are more charged with doctrine, but they contain more digressions than we can follow out here in detail. We must confine ourselves to giving first a general outline of the train of thought, and then an analysis of the chief ideas which underlie these books.

The *Paedagogus*<sup>29</sup> has as its object the moral reform of the Christian. It is divided into three books; the second and third set forth the teaching of the Tutor, while the first reveals to us his personality.

Our tutor, oh children, resembles God his Father; He is the Son of God, without sin and without defect; his soul is impassible; the immaculate God under a human form, the minister of the will of the Father, God the Word, who is in the Father, who comes from the right hand of the Father, God in human form. He is for us the immaculate image, to which with all our might, we are to endeavour to assimilate our soul. But He is wholly free from all human passions; the only judge, because He alone is without sin; but we must, as much as lies within our power, strive to keep ourselves as free as possible from sin.<sup>30</sup>

Thus, on the threshold of Christian morality there appears the incarnate Word; and the old precept, "Imitate God," has an altogether new value. Our God is altogether near to us by his humanity, and at the same time He is the immaculate Image of the Father, the ideal Model whom we must strive to resemble. These great ideas are set forth under innumerable different forms in the course of the first book. While doing so, Clement sets aside the heresies which threaten the Christian faith. He does not delay over controversy, but he brings out in full light the truths which have been misrepresented. The Gnostics imagine that there are castes

<sup>29</sup> Ed. Staehlin, Vol. I, pp. 87-340; Migne, P.G., Vol. VIII, 247-684. On the moral teaching set forth in this work, cf. Bardy, *op. cit.*, pp. 26 *et seq.*

<sup>30</sup> *Paedag.*, I, ii, 4, 1-2.

in Christianity, separating the psychicals from the pneumatics. This is a pernicious error:

As soon as we are regenerated by baptism, we immediately receive the perfect gift to which we aspire, for we have been enlightened, that is, we have received the knowledge of God, and one who has known the perfect cannot be imperfect. . . . Being baptised, we are enlightened; being enlightened we are the children of God; being children of God we receive a perfect gift; and receiving a perfect gift we possess immortality. . . . We the baptised, delivered from the sins the obscurity of which constituted an obstacle to the Holy Spirit, have the eye of a free mind, transparent and luminous, and by means of it we see God, the Holy Spirit being shed upon us from high heaven. Penetrated by this eternal ray, we are able to see the eternal light; for like loves like, and that which is holy is loved by the source of all sanctity, which is essentially light. For you were darkness, and now you are light in the Lord. . . . You have all been baptised in Christ, you have put on Christ; there is no longer Jew or Greek, bond or free, male or female, but you are all one in Christ Jesus. Thus it will not be said that some are Gnostics and others psychicals in the same Word, but all, having put off carnal desires, are equal and pneumatical in the Lord.<sup>31</sup>

It is a pity that we have had to abridge this passage, as it is of vital importance. Clement is under no illusions as to the imperfection of the Christian. He recognises that faith is only a starting point, and that the final term will be the eternal possession of the promises. But it is faith that gives us the assured pledge of these promises. "Whosoever believeth in the Son hath eternal life."<sup>32</sup> There is no other privilege to aspire to; beyond the divine adoption and eternal life there is nothing more, and these supreme goods are assured to all Christians by the fact of their baptism.

This one vocation of all Christians comes from the one God, and these gifts are conferred upon all through the one Church:

O wonderful mystery! There is but one Father of the universe, there is but one Logos of the universe, and the Holy Spirit likewise is one and the same everywhere. And there is but one Virgin Mother, for so I love to call the Church. This mother alone is without milk, for she is not a woman, but a virgin as well as a mother, pure as a virgin, loving as a mother; she calls her children and feeds with a holy milk, the Logos made child.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>31</sup> *Paedag.*, I, vi, 25, 1; 26, 1; 28, 1-2; 31, 1-2.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 28, 5-29, 1.

<sup>33</sup> *Paedag.*, I, vi, 42, 1. Cf. Batiffol, *L'Eglise naissante*, p. 314.



This fine passage brings to us echoes of a teaching we have heard more than once in the course of the second century, the motherhood of the Church which the old Hermas already revered with such touching tenderness.<sup>34</sup> That the Word became by His incarnation the milk of children had likewise been said by Irenæus.<sup>35</sup> All these symbols flow together here into one and the same mystical current, which carries the soul towards the Church. And the Church which Clement envisages is not at all the Church imagined by the Gnostics in the far-off shadow of the Pleroma, it is the one visible Church, which carries within itself all Christians, and feeds them all with the one Word.<sup>36</sup>

This high theology, developed in the course of the first book, dominates the whole of the *Paedagogus*; and it also gives to Clement's ethical teaching its Christian character. If we merely consider the details of the moral precepts, we shall recognise in Clement's works numerous elements borrowed from Musonius, Cicero, Gallienus, and, above all, from Philo.<sup>37</sup> This dependence is not at all surprising, and we could point out many other examples belonging to that time, especially in treatises on morals. But more interesting to us than this examination of sources is the study of the

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Bk. II, p. 451.

<sup>35</sup> "He, the perfect bread of the Father, has given himself to us as to little children under the form of milk; that is, his presence as man. He desires that, nourished by his flesh and accustomed by this food to eat and drink the Word of God, we may be able to assimilate to ourselves the bread of immortality which is the Spirit of the Father" (*Adv. Haer.*, IV, xxxviii, 1).

<sup>36</sup> The insistence with which Clement affirms this unity of God and of the Church marks a reaction against Marcionism. We often find in this work the same controversial preoccupation: "Our Pedagogue is the holy God Jesus, the Word who teaches the whole human race, the God who is the friend of mankind"; He it was who made his people come out of Egypt, who gradually formed it in the desert; it was He who appeared to Abraham, Jacob and Moses (I, vii, 55, 2-58, 3). This controversy becomes more direct in ch. vii-xii, in which Clement proves, against those who deny it, that the same God is just and good. See also the defence of the Law in *Strom.*, I, xxvii, 171. Cf. Bardy, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

<sup>37</sup> The borrowings from Musonius have especially been denounced by P. Wendland, *Quaestiones Musonianae*, Berlin, 1886. Subsequently Wendland modified his view: cf. *Beiträge zur Geschichte der griechischen Philosophie*, Berlin, 1895, pp. 68 *et seq.*; *Theologische Literaturzeitung*, 1898, p. 653. Here he says that Clement did not directly take from Musonius, but from notes made by a pupil of lectures of Musonius. Cf. Diels, *Doxographi Graeci*, pp. 129-132; Bardenheuer, *Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur*, Vol. II, p. 39. The source most frequently used is Philo: the instances are pointed out by Staehlin in the notes to his edition.

moral tendencies which are evident in all the details concerning precepts and prohibitions accumulated in these books.<sup>38</sup>

About the same date, Tertullian was given at Carthage the same moral teaching. But there was a great difference between them. Tertullian adopted a more vigorous treatment; he found, not in books but in life itself the faults and follies he opposed, and he condemned them with such harshness that he often ran the risk of wounding those he wished to heal. The priest of Alexandria did not display the passionate ardour of the priest at Carthage, nor did he speak with the same tragic accent. He denounced with a polite smile the follies of the worldly life;<sup>39</sup> he had a very just sense of decency and of what was fitting in Christians;<sup>40</sup> and in him the noble human ideal set forth by the best of the pagans, and traced out once more after them, has been transformed by the ideal model, the Christ, who projects his divine light upon all our life.

These characteristics, so plainly brought out in the whole of the first book, appear once more at the end of the work, where they are set forth in a full light:

O let us foster a blessed discipline of teaching! Let us complete in ourselves the beauty of the Church,<sup>41</sup> and as little children let us run to our good Mother. Even when we have become the hearers of the Word, let us glorify the blessed dispensation by which man has been brought up; he is sanctified as a child of God, and the education he

<sup>38</sup> The reader who has no time to follow out the whole course of this meaning thought in all its detail, but who nevertheless wishes to study its main direction and character, could not desire a better guide than M. Bardy (*op. cit.*, and especially second part, *La Vie chrétienne*, pp. 142-245).

<sup>39</sup> See, for instance, what is said of vesture in *Paed.*, II, viii, 65-68 and xii, 118. Cf. Bardy, *op. cit.*, pp. 156-159. We find even here the moderation of the moralist: he allows women to adorn themselves to please their husbands, but they ought "gradually to lead them to simplicity, by accustoming them little by little to greater moderation" (*Ibid.*, III, xi, 57; cf. Bardy, *op. cit.*, p. 160).

<sup>40</sup> Examples may be found in advice given to women: cf. Bardy, *op. cit.*, pp. 204-220. We will call attention merely to one or two features: "Beauty is the natural flower of health; the latter works within the body, while the former manifests the state of the flourishing organism which is unfolding itself. Accordingly, the best and most healthy activities, by exercising the body, produce healthy and lasting beauty" (*Paed.*, III, xi, 64, 3-65, 1). "Work gives true beauty to women; it exercises their bodies, and embellishes them naturally, not indeed with the vesture which comes from the labour of others, a vesture without charm and good for slaves and courtesans, but with the vesture which a good woman weaves for herself by the labour of her hands" (*Ibid.*, 67, 1).

<sup>41</sup> We like to read once more in this text the phrase which is so affecting, but so difficult to translate: Τὸ καλὸν τῆς ἐκκλησίας πληρῶσμεν πρόσωπον.

receives on earth makes him a citizen of the heavens; there he finds the Father whom he has learnt to know upon earth; and all this formation, this teaching, this education, comes to us from the Word. . . . To complete this praise of the Word, it remains for us to pray to Him. Be propitious to thy children, O pedagogue, Father, Horseman of Israel, Father and Son, both one single thing, and Lord! Grant to us that by following thy commandments we may complete the likeness of the image, and to realise as much as we can that God is good, and not a severe judge. Grant us to live in thy peace, to be transported to thy city, crossing without shipwreck the ocean of sin, and wafted on by the sweet breeze of the Holy Spirit, who is ineffable wisdom, night and day, until the dawn of the eternal day, singing a song of thanksgiving to the one Father and Son, Son and Father, to the Son our tutor and master, with the Holy Spirit. All to the One, in whom are all things and by whom all are one, by whom is eternity, of whom we are all members, to whom is glory and the ages. All to Him who is good, all to Him who is wise, to Him who is just, all to Him! To Him be glory now and for ever, Amen! <sup>42</sup>

### *The Stromata*

The works we have just examined have introduced us only to the moral preparation of the Christian. The *Protrepticus* invites him to it, and the *Paedagogus* trains him for it, but all this education is directed towards an end which is higher still, theological teaching. It is to this summit that the *Stromata* endeavour to raise the Christian.

The seven books <sup>43</sup> of the *Stromata* constitute the most important work of Clement, but also the one which most defies analysis. The title, *Stromata*, or *Miscellanies*, was not unknown at that time; <sup>44</sup> Clement himself explains it: a book of this kind is like a field filled with all sorts of plants; a man who is diligent will find there what he is seeking, but he must look for it. <sup>45</sup> Later on the writer shows at length the utility of symbols, which make known the truth only to those who deserve to know it. <sup>46</sup> After reading these declarations it is not surprising that the sequence of the book is often disconcert-

<sup>42</sup> *Paed.*, III, xii, 99, 1; 101, 1-2; Cf. Bardy, *op. cit.*, pp. 241-243; *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 237-238.

<sup>43</sup> The eighth book of the *Stromata*, of course, has a quite different character (cf. *supra*, p. 899).

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae*, pref., 11; De Faye, *op. cit.*, pp. 96-98.

<sup>45</sup> *Strom.*, IV, ii, 4-8.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, V, viii-ix, 19-66.

ing, and its detail obscure. We shall not follow out here all the course of his wandering thought; we will rather endeavour to describe the chief problems which Clement discusses, and the solution he offers of them. These discussions are all the more interesting to us because they make known to us not only the master of the Catechetical School, but also the Christians around him, who were being carried in opposite directions by currents of contrary ideas.<sup>47</sup>

Towards the end of the second and at the beginning of the third century, we notice almost everywhere in the Church, in Gaul,<sup>48</sup> at Carthage,<sup>49</sup> and Rome,<sup>50</sup> a divergence between the popular faith and learned theology. Doubtless this divergence did not amount to a contradiction: within the Church both learned and simple folk profess the same faith, but the simple people, alarmed at the Gnostic heresy, were not happy about learned speculations, and the scholars were similarly distrusted by the simple, and were sometimes annoyed in consequence.

This divergence was most manifest at Alexandria. Clement often complained of the opposition he encountered around him.<sup>51</sup> Already at the commencement of the *Stromata* this preoccupation is manifest:

Should there be no writing at all, or are there some to whom this right should be restricted? In the former case, of what use are letters? In the second alternative, is the right to write to be given to those who are in earnest or to those who are not? . . . Are we, for instance, to

<sup>47</sup> These opposing directions have been studied in greater detail in our articles in the *Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique*, Vol. XIX, 1923, pp. 481-505, and Vol. XX, 1924, pp. 5-37, *Le désaccord de la foi populaire et de la théologie savante dans l'Eglise chrétienne du III<sup>e</sup> siècle*. Cf. Bk. IV.

<sup>48</sup> Irenæus's thought is, as always in so great a master, prudent; but his preferences admit of no doubt; neither does his mistrust. Cf. *supra*, pp. 668-670 and Bk. IV.

<sup>49</sup> Tertullian, *De Praescriptione*, VII, 9-13; *Adv. Praxean*, III; cf. Bk. IV.

<sup>50</sup> Hippolytus and Novatian represent, among other tendencies, the opposition of theologians, proud of their science, to the bishops of Rome, whom they regarded as too simple. The position of Hippolytus is well described by Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte*, Vol. I, p. 741: "Hippolytus regards Zephyrinus and the others as simple folk, because they do not wish to take up the new science with its 'economic' conception of God." As for Novatian, it is enough to recall the jeers of Cornelius against "this dogmatiser, this protector of ecclesiastical science" (letter to Fabius, in Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xliii, 8), and Cyprian's invectives: "Let him exalt himself, let him proudly boast of his philosophy and his eloquence!" (letter to Antonianus, *Epist.*, lv, 24, cf. letter to Cornelius, *Epist.*, LX, iii).

<sup>51</sup> Cf. De Faye, *op. cit.*, pp. 137 *et seq.*

allow Theopompus, Timaeus the author of impure fables, Epicurus the advocate of atheism, Hipponax or Archilochus, to write their shameful works, and forbid one who sets forth the truth to leave to posterity writings which will do good? (*Strom.*, I, i, 1-2.)

And a little later on, in this same *Stromata*:

I am not unaware that certain ignorant people, who take fright at the least noise, would have us confine ourselves to essential things and those related to the faith, and think we ought to neglect those things which come from without and are superfluous (*Ibid.*, I, i, 18, 2).

And again:

Some people, who think themselves to be spiritual, hold that one ought to have nothing to do either with philosophy or with dialectic, or even to apply oneself to the study of the universe. They advocate faith pure and simple, as if they were to refuse to labour on a vine and wanted immediately to pick the grapes (*Ibid.*, I, ix, 43, 1).

These texts, and many others which might be added, show that the situation at Alexandria was more tense than it was in the West at that time; suspicions were more prevalent among the simple believers, and there was more irritation among the theologians. E. de Faye explains this alarm in the faithful as due to the more vivid realisation of the danger of the Gnostic heresy.<sup>52</sup> This explanation is correct, but it is incomplete. Within the Church itself there were at Alexandria some "gnostics," that is Christians who, without denying the traditional dogmas or in any way refusing the obedience due to the Church, aimed at a more profound and more thoughtful knowledge of the truths they professed. This was a feature peculiar to Alexandrian Christianity, and that is why the conflict was sharper and more formidable in that church.

To meet the difficulty, Clement in his *Stromata* has to discuss two great problems, the relations between Hellenism and Christianity, and those between gnosis and the faith.

### *Hellenism and Christianity*

Of these two problems, the former is not the most serious, but it is the most obvious. Is Hellenism, regarded especially from the point of view of its philosophy, reconcilable with Christianity?

<sup>52</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 140.

Ought Christians to see in it a danger or a help? To this question, Tertullian gave at that time the most severe and most definite answer.<sup>53</sup> Hippolytus brought more erudition to the discussion, but he had no more sympathy for hellenism or its philosophy, which he regarded as sources of heresies. Clement takes the opposite view. He, of course, adheres to Christianity with all his soul, but this does not prevent him from retaining a sentiment of heartfelt gratitude towards hellenic philosophy, such as had already been manifested by certain apologists, and in particular by Justin, without, however, the rich learning which unfolds itself in Clement's writings, and especially in the *Stromata*.<sup>54</sup>

Such fidelity in the case of Clement is the more remarkable because things were no longer as they were in the time of Justin. During the thirty or forty years separating the Alexandrian from the Roman master, the Gnostic crisis had greatly disturbed Christians, who had in consequence instinctively become more suspicious of outside influences. This mistrust was well known to Clement, but it did not stop him: quite the contrary. His reaction did not express itself merely in one simple reply but in a deliberate and bold thesis: the hellenic philosophy is a gift from God and salutary, whether we regard its action upon pagans in the past or its present influence upon Christians. These are two aspects of one and the same thesis.<sup>55</sup> Clement sometimes distinguishes them, but often he completes one by the other. It is in the *Stromata* that his thought is best expressed; it is complex and balanced, strongly affirming the independence and transcendence of Christian truth, but at the same time claiming for hellenic philosophy a rôle which is doubtless secondary and preparatory, but is nevertheless a beneficial one. We will venture to transcribe here a somewhat lengthy passage, in which we get, in its light and shade, the whole conception of Clement, with its boldness and its reserve:

When several men row a boat, we do not say there are many causes, but one only, composed of many forces. . . . Such is the function of philosophy in the attaining of truth. Being a search for the truth, it is not the cause of its attainment, but it concurs in this and co-operates in

<sup>53</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 825.

<sup>54</sup> To get some idea of this, it will suffice to run through the notes and tables in the edition of Staehlin.

<sup>55</sup> On these two aspects, see De Faye, *op. cit.*, ch. V (pp. 174-191) and VI (pp. 192-200).

it with others. . . . There is only one truth, but many things combine in its seeking, and it is through the Son that we find it. When the matter is properly considered, we see that virtue is one in potency, but we call it, according to its objects, here prudence, there temperance, and elsewhere force or justice. In the same way, truth is unique; and yet in geometry there is geometrical truth, in music, musical truth; and so, in philosophy there is philosophical truth, and this is the hellenic truth. But there is only one principal truth, beyond our reach, and that is the Son of God, who teaches it to us. . . . And although philosophy concurs from a distance in the discovery of truth, tending by different conceptions to that which immediately attains to the truth, that is, human knowledge, it assists only one who by his own reason tries to attain to gnosis. Also, the hellenic truth differs from our own truth, although it bears the same name, by the extent of knowledge, the force of the demonstration, divine power, and by many other like qualities. For we ourselves are disciples of God, formed by the Son of God in truly sacred Scriptures, and hence souls are quite differently affected, and by a quite different teaching. If the tricks of our adversaries compel us to make distinctions, we say that philosophy concurs and co-operates in true apprehension, being itself the search for the truth and the education preparatory to gnosis; and we do not regard this concursus as a cause, or attribute to this co-operation a necessary and indispensable efficacy, seeing that almost all of us have been touched without such encyclopædic formation, and some even without a knowledge of letters, by divine and common philosophy; it is by power that we have received from God the word of faith, having been taught by a word which is efficacious of itself. . . . And yet formerly philosophy justified the Greeks of itself. Of course, it did not give them complete justice, for it could only co-operate in this: it is like the first and second step for one who desires to ascend to the upper floor, or like grammar for one who wishes to study philosophy; one deprived of it would not thereby lose the whole Logos, or the possession of the truth. Sight likewise plays a part in the perception of the truth, and hearing, and the voice, but it is only the intelligence that attains to it by nature. But of these secondary causes, some have more virtue and others less. Clearness of mind serves for the transmitting of the truth; dialectics helps to prevent one from falling into the snares of heresies; the discipline of Our Saviour is perfect and sufficient, being the power and wisdom of God; hellenic philosophy, in combining with it, does not make the truth more powerful, but makes powerless the sophistical attacks directed against it (*Strom.*, I, xx, 97, 1-100, 1).

This long passage sets forth, better perhaps than any other, Clement's conception. The question he discusses is a vital one to

him: faced with impassioned opponents who maintain that "philosophy is an evil invention of the Devil for the purpose of poisoning the life of mankind,"<sup>56</sup> he himself becomes excited, and sometimes his language goes beyond his real thought: philosophy would be a third Testament, comparable to the Law, given to men to teach them justice;<sup>57</sup> further, it would be of itself a principle of justification. Isolated from their context,<sup>58</sup> these affirmations may surprise us and seem to be bold paradoxes; in point of fact Clement himself realised their exaggerated character, and took care to modify them.<sup>59</sup>

### *Function of Philosophy*

Merely by reading again the passage quoted above, a reader will notice the reservations made by Clement in enunciating a thesis which, without them, would be over-bold and exaggerated. Philosophy concurs in the discovery of truth as a distant preparation, which does not suffice to assure us of its possession, and is not even an indispensable preparation. The proof of this is that the majority of Christians have arrived at the Faith without having known hellenic philosophy, and some even without a knowledge of letters. If we compare this philosophy to Christian truth, we see that the latter is altogether transcendent "in the extent of knowledge, by the efficacy of the demonstration, and by a divine power."<sup>60</sup>

Once these essential truths have thus been firmly safeguarded, Clement ascribes to hellenic philosophy great privileges. The first and chief privilege is that it is "the philosophy,"<sup>61</sup> so much so that he does not contemplate the existence of any other human philosophy. He does indeed speak occasionally of "philosophy according

<sup>56</sup> *Strom.*, I, 1, 18, 2. Cf. also *Strom.*, VI, viii, 66, 1; *Strom.*, VI, xvii, 159, 1; *Strom.*, I, xvii, 81, 4.

<sup>57</sup> *Strom.*, VI, v, 42, 1; VI, viii, 67, 1. Cf. *Strom.*, VI, xiii, 106, 3.

<sup>58</sup> It is a pity that they are thus presented by De Faye, *op. cit.*, pp. 176-177.

<sup>59</sup> We have seen this in the passage quoted above. After saying "philosophy justified the Greeks of itself," he added: "Of course, it did not give them complete justice; it can only co-operate in this. . . ." Similarly he says: "Philosophy was given to the Greeks as a testament which belonged to them specially" (*Strom.*, VI, viii, 67, 1), but he adds at once: "it is like a lower stage by which we arrive at philosophy according to Christ."

<sup>60</sup> On this transcendence of the Christian revelation, cf. Lebreton, *La théorie de la connaissance religieuse chez Clément d'Alexandrie*, in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XVIII, 1928, pp. 461 et seq.

<sup>61</sup> "In philosophy there is philosophical truth, and this is the hellenic truth."



to Christ," but then, as he expressly says, he is thinking of "a quite different discipline" by which "we are disciples of God, formed by the Son of God in truly sacred Scriptures." He also allows that all men, even without the advantage of the Christian revelation, and even without the aid of philosophy, can arrive at a knowledge of God.<sup>62</sup> But, previous to the Christian revelation, some men, *i.e.*, the Greek philosophers, were able to organise a system of religious and moral truths. He adds: "I call philosophy, not the Stoic, nor the Platonist, nor the Epicurean, nor the Aristotelian system, but all that has been well said in each school, every religious science which teaches justice, all this eclectic whole I call philosophy."<sup>63</sup> This eclecticism was then very widespread, but what is peculiar to Clement is his justification of it: "I cannot recognise divine teaching in the deformations which have been introduced into human reasoning."

The principle which underlies all these theses is that everything that is good comes from God,<sup>64</sup> and accordingly, philosophy. But Clement adds at once: "God gives it to us, not as the main object he has in view," but as an accessory. It is a seed which the Logos scatters over all the earth and which can bring forth good or evil fruit, according to the character of the land, just as rain produces very different results when it descends "upon fertile fields, or on dunghills, or on houses."<sup>65</sup> The same idea is repeated in a different form in the sixth book of *Stromata*. Once more Clement distinguishes between the essential objects of the Divine Providence, and those which are only accessories. From the former, as from the head, the blessing of God spreads over all the others, as over the hair and the clothing, just as the oil ran down on Aaron's beard and on to the fringe of his vestment. Aaron is the High Priest, the Logos; the vestment is philosophy.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>62</sup> Cf. article referred to in n. 60, and *Strom.*, V, xiii, 87, 2: "We always find in all upright men the natural manifestation of the one almighty God, and the majority receive from divine Providence an eternal blessing, or at least those who have not impudently rejected the truth. . . ."

<sup>63</sup> *Strom.*, I, vii, 37, 6.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, I, v, 28, 2.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, I, vii, 37, 1: Θεόθεν ἦκειν εἰς ἀνθρώπους οὐ κατὰ προηγούμενον. . . Here once more, De Faye, in reproducing the text of Clement (*op. cit.*, p. 178 and n. 2), has omitted the reservation which modifies it.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, xvii, 163, 1-4. Clement repeats here the essential word of the preceding passage: ἡ πρόνοια ἀνωθεν ἐκ' τῶν προηγούμενων εἰς πάντας διήκει. He emphasises it by the final words: "Philosophy does not form a part of the people, it is external to it, as a vestment (is to the body)."

All this brings out at once the boldness and the reserve in Clement's thought: to say that philosophy comes from the devil is to insult, not only philosophy, but also God, the one source of all good. Even so, we must carefully note that this blessing is, in the eyes of God, only an accessory one, and that this help is only by way of preparation and an auxiliary. It is, as it were, the overflow of an immense Goodness which pours itself out over the world, and which mankind is able to use, but also to misuse.

If we compare this conception with that which Justin sketched out in his second *Apology*,<sup>67</sup> we observe a great progress. In both cases, these truths scattered over the human race are regarded as seeds of the Word; they come from the same source as the Christian revelation, but they are very inferior to the latter. Justin represents them as fragments of the complete truth which has come to us in Jesus Christ; Clement dwells much more on this comparison, and makes it clearer. Leaving aside the spatial metaphor of the fragments and the whole, he shows that the Christian revelation is the essential object aimed at by God, *προηγούμενον*, and that all the rest are accessories and preparations which lead man towards this fundamental truth, and help him to grasp it better. Such is the function of philosophy for mankind.<sup>68</sup>

Just as philosophy has been, as it were, a preparatory training for Christianity for the human race as a whole, so also it has fulfilled this office for Christians. To show this, Clement borrows from Philo the allegorical interpretation of the history of Sara and of Agar;<sup>69</sup> Abraham is the just man united to wisdom, symbolised by Sara, and to encyclopædic knowledge, represented by Agar. Sara is at first sterile, and Agar has to give Abraham his children. Now, as

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Bk. II, p. 551.

<sup>68</sup> In this conception, the truths which philosophy teaches and transmits come, as we have said, as a gift from God. Clement likes to represent this gift as a seed coming from the Logos (*Protrept.*, vii, 74, 7); certain people, whom he does not name, attribute the inspiration of philosophy to inferior powers (*Strom.*, I, xvi, 80, 5; cf. *ibid.*, xvii, 81, 4). This thesis, here set aside, is repeated later in another form: philosophy comes from the Logos, but it was given to the Greeks through lower angels (*Strom.*, VII, ii, 6, 4); cf. art. mentioned, pp. 466-467. Together with this conception, we find another, which was familiar to the earlier apologists, but which we are surprised to find in Clement: these truths came from the Bible, and were borrowed from it by the philosophers; Bossuet (*op. cit.*, pp. 205-218) regards this thesis of borrowings from the Jews as an indication of an earlier source. On this conception in the apologists, cf. Bk. II, pp. 552, 572.

<sup>69</sup> *Strom.*, I, v, 30, 3-32, 3. Cf. Philo, *De congressu eruditionis gratia*, lxxvii et seq.

Clement repeats after Philo, "the part played by the encyclopædic sciences in respect of philosophy is also the part played by philosophy itself in the acquisition of wisdom."<sup>70</sup> Elsewhere he compares philosophy to a wall protecting the enclosure of truth and preventing it from being trodden under foot by the sophists.<sup>71</sup> Then, setting aside all these symbols, he thus expounds his thought:

We say, then, to speak without figure, that philosophy comprises the search for the truth and the nature of things. It was of this truth that the Lord said: "I am the Truth." We say moreover that it prepares for repose in Christ; it exercises the mind, it arouses the intelligence, and gives it the penetration whereby it will be able to carry on the search, thanks to the true philosophy, and when we have found it, or rather when we have received it from the Truth Itself, we possess it.<sup>72</sup>

Apart from this educational function, philosophy has another: it develops and illuminates the faith. "Just as we say that it is possible to be a believer even if one is illiterate, so also we recognise that it is impossible without science to understand the whole content of the faith."<sup>73</sup>

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 30, 1. Cf. Philo, *ibid.*, lxxix.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, I, xx, 100, 1. Same figure in *Strom.*, VI, x, 80, 4. Here again Clement follows Philo, *De agricultura*, xiv *et seq.* Philo in turn had borrowed this figure from Plato (*De republica*, VII).

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, I, v, 32, 4. Cf. *Strom.*, VI, x, 83, 2: "Although the truth which is manifested in hellenic philosophy is only partial, the real truth acts like the sun which illumines the colours, white and black, and makes them visible; thus philosophy confounds the apparent reasonings of the sophists." Other similar texts will be found in De Faye, *op. cit.*, pp. 194-196.

<sup>73</sup> *Strom.*, I, vi, 35, 2. The reason he gives in this place is that without science one cannot discern what is to be received and what set aside: hence philosophy acts here also as an instrument of discernment rather than as an instrument of discovery. The same question is considered at greater length in *Strom.*, V, throughout the first chapter. This deals with the Faith; and in many passages Clement assigns a part to science in the development of the Faith. "The common faith is at the base as a foundation . . . ; excellent faith is raised above; it is perfected in the believer, and is completed with (the faith) which comes from knowledge and the fulfilling of the precepts of reason. Such were the apostles, of whom it is said that faith was strong enough to move mountains and to transplant trees" (V, ii, 5-6). "We say that faith must not be idle or isolated, but it must be associated with research and progress. . . . The intuition of the soul must tend towards discovery, and at the same time we must remove all obstacles, the spirit of contention, of jealousy, of deceit" (*ibid.*, II, 1-4). But even more important than the intellectual effort is the love of God: "God is love, He is known by those who love; God is faithful, teaching makes Him known to the faithful. We must resemble Him by divine love, so that like may be contemplated by like, listening to the word of truth sincerely and purely, as our children are

Our study has shown us in Clement an ever lively sympathy for Greek philosophy: he had himself been formed in it, and remained grateful for this. But all this hellenic past was now far removed from him;<sup>74</sup> he has been seized by a new force, which is carrying him much farther and higher. A rapid study of the *Stromata* will make this clear to us.

### *The Word as Revealer*

The first feature which wholly distinguishes Clement from Plotinus is the office which the Christian theologian attributes to the Logos, the Word of God. It is through the Word that all revelation comes to us: such is the thesis continually enunciated by Clement. We have found it in the *Protrepticus*, and the *Paedagogus*; it is often returned to in the *Stromata*.<sup>75</sup> Clement has just shown that the knowledge of God has to be taught to us. But who is to do this? Mankind cannot do it, and even the angels cannot reveal God to human beings.

Since the unproduced Being is unique, the all-powerful God, his firstborn is also unique, . . . and is the one whom all the prophets call Wisdom, He is the Master of all created beings, the Counsellor of God who has governed all things by his Providence. He it is who, from the beginning, from the first creation of the world, has instructed (us) in many ways and in many forms, and He also completes his teaching. That is why He rightly says: "Call no man your master on earth." Thou seest the prizes of true philosophy.<sup>76</sup>

This Master is in men's hearts as a seed of truth; he is symbolised by the grain of mustard seed, by the seed of the sower, and by the

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obedient to ourselves" (*ibid.*, 13, 1-2). On this subject, the following are of interest: P. Camelot, *Les Idées de Clément d'Alexandrie sur l'utilisation des Sciences et de la Littérature profane; Clément d'Alexandrie et l'utilisation de la Philosophie grecque*, in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XXI, 1931, pp. 38-66, and 541-569.

<sup>74</sup> If one wants to realise how far removed it is, read J. Meifort, *Der Platonismus bei Clemens Alexandrinus*, Tübingen, 1928. The writer shows how the Platonist metaphysic is transformed by Clement into a religious speculation.

What is true of philosophy is still truer in the case of the Mysteries. The use of the terminology of the Mysteries was traditional at Alexandria, and it was already clear in Philo. Cf. Bréhier, *Philon d'Alexandrie* (Louvain, 1924), pp. 73-80. In Clement also, the Mysteries play a great part, but in expression rather than in thought. Cf. Mayor, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-1x, *Clement and the Mysteries*.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. in particular *Strom.*, VI, vii, 57.

<sup>76</sup> *Strom.*, VI, vii, 58, 1-2.

heaven.<sup>77</sup> It is He who, as we have seen, has given to mankind the partial intuitions of philosophy; <sup>78</sup> He is also the revealer of the two Testaments.<sup>79</sup>

In this doctrine we recognise an echo of the previous tradition. St. Justin had already contrasted the complete Logos which has appeared in Jesus Christ with the partial Logos whose seeds are scattered amongst the human race, not only in the chosen people but also in hellenism. St. Irenæus likewise had attributed all revelation to the action of the Word of God. At the same time it must be allowed that it is Justin we recognise here rather than Irenæus, and a Justin whose ideas have been widened, and whose philosophy has become more mystical and more ardent.

On the other hand, the strong relief which the Incarnation has in the theology of Irenæus disappears here. The Son of God is the sole Master, inasmuch as He is the divine Logos, rather than as incarnate. Even to-day, the Christ acts in us much more by his intimate action than by the transmission of his doctrine as taught in the Gospel and set forth by the Church.<sup>80</sup>

### *The Church*

The office of the Church is rather difficult to define.<sup>81</sup> One thing is clear: Clement loves the Church as a mother. This filial veneration appears in the *Paedagogus*,<sup>82</sup> and the text we have already quoted from it is by no means singular.<sup>83</sup> An office of this kind, maternal and salutary, can belong only to a Church which is living and real. We have already said that this Church does not lose itself, as does that of the Gnostics, in dreams of the Æons of the Pleroma; it lives and functions here below. At the same time it must be admitted that this earthly Church is usually described as

<sup>77</sup> *Paedag.*, I, xi, 96, 2; *Strom.*, IV, vi, 31, 5; *Strom.*, V, xii, 80, 8.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. above, p. 913, n. 68.

<sup>79</sup> *Strom.*, II, vi, 29, 2.

<sup>80</sup> On all this, cf. article referred to, in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XVIII, 1928, pp. 465-469.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. Batiffol, *L'Eglise naissante*, pp. 305-316; *Recherches de Science religieuse*, art. mentioned, pp. 470-478.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 905.

<sup>83</sup> Cf. *Paedagog.*, I, v, 21; 1: "As a mother consoles her little children, so will I console you. The mother leads her little children, and we seek for our mother, the Church." *Ibid.*, I, vi, 27, 2: "Just as the will of God is an action, and is called the world, so its intention is the salvation of men, and this is called the Church."

the image of the heavenly one, and that it is this ideal Church, "the Church on high," which is more often the subject of Clement's thought in the *Stromata*.<sup>84</sup>

This is not surprising if we remember the constant aspirations of his soul towards the heavenly world, "the holy mountain of God, the Church on high, in which are gathered together the philosophers of God, the Israelites, the pure in heart, in whom there is no guile."<sup>85</sup> Yet, in spite of this impatience of a contemplative soul continually directing its gaze towards heaven, we also find, at least in Book VII of the *Stromata*, very clear texts concerning the visible Church, which is older than all the heresies and the sole depository of the authentic tradition of the apostles. Thus:

It is evident that these younger heresies, and those which are still more recent, are novelties and alterations in respect of the older and truer Church. After what has been said I consider it is manifest that there is only one true Church, that which is really old and to which the truly just belong. As God is one and the Lord is one, that which is supremely venerable will also be praised as being one, thus imitating its source which is one. It is thus bound up with the nature of unity, this Church which is one, and which the heretics endeavour to divide up into many heresies. Hence, in substance, in idea, in principle, in excellence, we say that the ancient and Catholic Church is one in the unity of the one faith, which is according to the Testaments which belong to her, or rather according to the one Testament which, in different times, by the will of the one God and the one Lord, unites together all the elect, all those whom God has predestined having known them already before the creation of the world as the ones to be just. The excellence of the Church, like the principle of its constitution, is in its unity, and she is above all the other things, for there is nothing similar nor equal to her.<sup>86</sup>

We cannot help noticing in this text the insistence with which unity is affirmed: the unity of God, the unity of the Lord, the unity of the Faith, the unity of the Testaments or rather of the Testament, and the unity of the Church. We have found these strong affirmations already in Irenæus and Tertullian; we shall find them again in Origen: everywhere we find the same Catholic reac-

<sup>84</sup> *Strom.*, IV, viii, 66, 1; IV, xxvi, 172, 2; VI, xiv, 108, 1; VII, ii, 29, 3; VII, vi, 32, 4; VII, xi, 68, 5. Texts collected together in the article already mentioned, pp. 470-471.

<sup>85</sup> *Strom.*, VI, xiv, 108, 1.

<sup>86</sup> *Strom.*, VII, xvii, 107, 2-6. Cf. Batiffol, *op. cit.*, p. 313.

tion against the dualism of the Gnostics and especially of Marcion. In Clement, as in all his contemporaries, the attacks of heresy call forth a more jealous fidelity to the Church, and a more categorical affirmation of its unique transcendence.

All this reminds us yet once more that Clement was a Catholic, wholly attached to the Church, or rather, that he was a priest conscious of his responsibilities, and vigilant in defending and guiding his flock. This essential characteristic, which we found even in his first works, and which was testified anew at the very end of his life by Bishop Alexander, must never be lost sight of. But it must not lead us to overlook the differences which distinguish the character of the Catholicism of Clement from that of Irenæus.<sup>87</sup>

Clement was involved in the fight against heresies, as was Irenæus and Tertullian. In Gaul and in Africa, the decisive weapon was the baptismal creed. Clement does not have recourse to this,<sup>88</sup> and his silence already indicates to us that the official and catechetical preaching of the revealed truth has not for Clement the same importance as for his contemporaries, Irenæus or Tertullian. On the other hand, we perceive in his works a mysterious tradition to which he attaches a great value. This thesis, often mentioned in his works, is set forth above all in Book V of the *Stromata*.<sup>89</sup> We may summarise it thus: There is a whole order of higher truths which are not accessible to all Christians, but only to a group of privileged people; this is "the richness of the glory of the mystery which is among the Gentiles." All believers do not attain to it; "it is only to a small number of them that these things, which are in the mystery, are shown" (*loc. cit.*, 64, 6). These mysterious truths are

<sup>87</sup> Cf. article mentioned, pp. 471-488.

<sup>88</sup> Cf. Kattenbusch, *Das Apostolische Symbol*, Leipzig, 1894-1900, Vol. II, pp. 102-134. At most we have a reference to the baptismal profession of faith in *Strom.*, VII, xv, 90, 1; cf. art. mentioned, pp. 471-472.

<sup>89</sup> *Strom.*, V, x-xi, 60-77. Cf. art. mentioned, pp. 472-478; D. Van den Eynde, *Les Normes de l'Enseignement chrétien*, Paris, 1933, pp. 220-226. When he was in controversy with Bossuet concerning the states of prayer, Fénelon appealed to the authority of Clement of Alexandria, and especially to his thesis concerning the secret tradition. During the Summer of 1694, he wrote on this theme a little book entitled *Le Gnostique de Saint Clément d'Alexandrie*. Bossuet answered this in *La Tradition des nouveaux mystiques*, and in *Les états d'oraison*. This opusculum of Fénelon, which had remained unpublished, was finally published by P. Dudon, *Le Gnostique de Saint Clément d'Alexandrie*, Paris, 1930. Ch. xvi (pp. 243-249) is devoted to this thesis: "The gnosis is founded on a secret tradition." This thesis, indignantly attacked by Bossuet, was retracted by Fénelon (*Ibid.*, pp. 143-145).

not taught explicitly as are the doctrines of a catechism; they are transmitted under the veil of symbols, in which only the perfect are able to attain to them. Clement thus interprets St. Paul (*I Cor.* ii, 6): "We speak wisdom among the perfect, the wisdom not of this world, neither of the princes of this world who come to nought; but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom."<sup>90</sup> We have thus a sort of *Secret* here, but what the *Secret* hides is, not the mysteries or ceremonies of Christian worship as the whole Church knows and practises them, but higher things, to which only gnosis can attain.

Again, there is here a Tradition, but it is a secret Tradition: "The Lord, after his resurrection, gave the gnosis to James the Just, to John and to Peter; these transmitted it to the other apostles, and the other apostles to the seventy disciples, one of whom was Barnabas."<sup>91</sup> "This gnosis, coming from the apostles and transmitted orally, has come down through this succession to a small number of men."<sup>92</sup>

Hence, in the very bosom of the Church, there is a distinction between two classes of men:<sup>93</sup> some attain to truth by the Faith; the others possess it in a fuller way by contemplation, or, to adopt the language of Clement, by gnosis:

The Faith is thus, so to speak, an abridged gnosis of the indispensable things, and gnosis is a firm and solid demonstration of the objects grasped by the Faith. The latter comes from the Lord's teaching, it is built upon the Faith, and leads to a permanent and scientific possession. It seems to me that there is a first saving change, the conversion from heathenism to the Faith, and a second, the conversion of faith to gnosis. And gnosis, being consummated in love, brings together the knower and the known as friend to friend. And perhaps one who has become

<sup>90</sup> He finds the same idea in Plato, *Epist.* II, p. 312 d; 314 bc: "I have to write to you in enigmas, so that if this letter is seized on land or sea, he who may read it will not be able to understand it"; also in *Isaias* xlv. 3: "I will give thee hidden treasures, and the concealed riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I am the Lord who called thee," and in *Psalms* xviii, 3; Day to day uttereth speech,—that which is publicly written,—and night to night sheweth knowledge—that is, gnosis, that which is hidden mystically."

<sup>91</sup> *Hypotyposes*, in Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, II, 1.

<sup>92</sup> *Strom.*, VI, vii, 61, 3. Cf. *Strom.*, I, i, 11, 3; *Strom.*, I, xii, 55-56; *Strom.*, VI, xv, 131; *Adumbrat. in Joann.*, I, 1.

<sup>93</sup> These two classes of men are not determined by their natural qualities, predestinating the one kind to the faith and the other to gnosis; that heretical thesis is refuted by Clement in the *Paedagogus* (above, p. 903), and again in *Strom.*, VI, ix, 78, 4, and xi, 95, 5; cf. art. mentioned, pp. 478-479.



this already here below becomes the equal of the angels. Hence after this supreme progress in the flesh, being continually transformed, as is meet, from better to better, he goes forward in the paternal fold towards the dwelling which is truly that of the Lord, passing through the seven holy spheres, to be, so to speak, a light which is fixed and remains eternally and absolutely unchangeable in every way.<sup>94</sup>

We notice at the end of this passage a perspective opening out on the future life. This is because the profound distinction which separates here below the gnostic from the simple believer, is consecrated by death. In the next world there are two folds, one reserved for the gnostics, and the other open to the simple faithful who, although saved, suffer from the inferiority of their lot, and find in this their greatest sorrow, "that of not being with those who are glorified for their justice." Clement does not shrink from applying to them the text of the *Book of Wisdom*: "They will see the end of the wise . . . and they shall say: 'These are they whom we had some time in derision, and for a parable of reproach. We fools esteemed their life madness, and their end without honour. Behold how they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the saints.'"<sup>95</sup>

This brings home to us the danger of these exalted spiritual ambitions: the gnostic indulges in dreams of a separate beatitude in the other world which will compensate him for the contempt with which he is regarded here below by the simple faithful. We need hardly add that these features have not been retained in the Church's teaching. And it is not surprising that Rome has not recognised Clement as one of its doctors, and that we cannot ask with Fénelon: "What Catholic theologian will dare to reject the authority of St. Clement?"<sup>96</sup>

<sup>94</sup> *Strom.*, VII, x, 57, 3-5. We reproduce only the most interesting part of this text, which will be found quoted at greater length and commented on in the article already mentioned, pp. 480-482. Cf. Bardy, *op. cit.*, pp. 270-275, and the notes by Hort in his edition of the seventh book of the *Stromata*.

<sup>95</sup> This severe comment could be understood if we could interpret it of a temporary expiation or a purgatory. But Clement sees in it a pain which will last for ever: "Even though the punishment required for the expiation of faults and by personal purification will come to an end, there remains always to those who have been judged worthy of the second fold the greatest pain of all, that of not being with those who are glorified for their justice." This whole text, from which we have here quoted only a few words, is very important: *Strom.*, VI, xiv, 108-114. Cf. art. mentioned, pp. 482-483, and Bk. IV.

<sup>96</sup> *Le Gnostique*, p. 247.

This reserve, however, must not make us forget all we owe to the master of the Catechetical School. Passionately imbued with the desire to know God, he devoted his whole life to the search of this supreme good; he has carried along with him not only his immediate disciples at Alexandria and the East as a whole, but also those who to-day still read his works.

BOOK IV

*The Church in the  
Third Century  
Part II*

NIHIL OBSTAT:

EDUARDUS CAN. MAHONEY, S.Th.D.  
*Censor deputatus*

IMPRIMATUR

✠E. MORROGH BERNARD  
*Vic. Gen.*

WESTMONASTERII  
*die 16a Januarii 1947*

## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

*This fourth and last book of The History of the Primitive Church deals with the period which begins in the middle of the third century and ends with the Peace of Constantine in 312. The principles governing citations from the Scriptures and ecclesiastical writers are the same as for previous volumes. Notes within brackets have been added on my own responsibility. At the end of the volume will be found an Index to the whole work.*

*These four English books correspond to Volumes I and II of the monumental Histoire de l'Eglise planned under the editorship of Fliche and Martin. Eight French volumes have so far appeared, and in view of the favourable reception accorded to my translation of the first two, constituting the present work, a beginning has now been made of the translation of other volumes. The English version of the French third and fourth volumes, and possibly of the fifth also, will appear in due course, under the title The Church in the Christian Roman Empire. It has been written by a new group of authors, and will accordingly be treated as a new and independent work.*

ORIGEN<sup>1</sup>*Importance of Origen's Work*

IN THE whole of Christian Antiquity, at least in the Eastern Church, there is no writer who is so attractive, whose glory is so disputed, or whose study is so difficult, as Origen. He was praised during his lifetime by saints like Alexander of Jerusalem and Gregory Thaumaturgus, but he was condemned by his own bishop and expelled from his church. After his death, he had enthusiastic defenders among the greatest saints and the most illustrious doctors, and yet his teaching was condemned by the Council of Constantinople in 553 in a decision which was confirmed by Pope Vigilius. To-day we possess only some portions of his immense work, and the greater part of it has come down to us only by means of translations, the accuracy of which is by no means certain. In spite of all these difficulties, however, it is not impossible to determine in outline the life, character and thought of this famous doctor.

The study of Origen is of tremendous importance for the history of the third and also of the fourth century. His personal influence radiated not only upon Alexandria but also over the whole East. The sentence passed by Bishop Demetrius, who expelled the already well-known master from the Catechetical School and from

<sup>1</sup> Bibliography.—Editions: Migne's Greek Patrology reproduces the edition of Delarue (Vols. XI-XVI), adding (Vol. XVII) Huet's *Origeniana*; *Griechische Christliche Schriftsteller*, 11 volumes published by 1933. Studies: Huet, *Origeniana* (Migne, P.G., Vol. XVII); Tillemont, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire ecclésiastique*, Vol. III, pp. 494-595 in the Venice edition, 1732; Redepenning, *Origenes, Eine Darstellung seines Lebens und seiner Lehre* (Bonn, 1841-1846, 2 vols.); Freppel, *Origène*, Paris, 1888, 2 vols.; J. Denis, *La philosophie d'Origène*, Paris, 1884; F. Prat, *Origène, le théologien et l'exégète* (Collection *La Pensée Chrétienne*), Paris, 1907; A. Harnack, *Der kirchengeschichtliche Ertrag der exegetischen Arbeiten des Origenes*, in *Texte und Untersuchungen*, Vol. XLII, 3-4, Leipzig, 1918-1919; E. de Faye, *Origène, Sa vie, son œuvre, sa pensée*, Paris, 1923-1930, 3 vols., cf. D'Alès, in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XX, 1930, pp. 224-268; *Origen and his Work*, by the same, English translation of lectures at the University of Upsala in 1925, London, 1926; W. Voelker, *Das Vollkommenheitsideal des Origenes*, Tübingen, 1931; H. Kock, *Pronoia und Paideusis, Studien über Origenes und sein Verhältnis zum Platonismus*, Berlin, 1932; R. Cadiou, *Introduction au système d'Origène*, Paris, 1932; G. Bardy, art. *Origène* in *Dict. de théol. cath.*, Vol. XI, cols. 1489-1565.

Egypt, caused him to go to the churches of Palestine which had long venerated him and which would henceforth be his home, and from thence his influence was to extend over Syria, Asia, Cappadocia and Achaia. The difference in the attitude adopted towards the condemnation of Origen, accepted in the West but rejected in the East, already anticipates the doctrinal divergences which will divide still further and even antagonise the Eastern and Western provinces.

The widespread influence of Origen will not surprise anyone who studies his teaching. In him, theology aims no longer merely at refuting opponents, but also at instructing Christians; it sets out to penetrate revealed truths more closely, and to co-ordinate them in a doctrinal synthesis in which the mind can find a place for all that it believes and all that it knows. To provide a basis for this theological systematisation, so courageous, so rich in fruitful ideas, but at the same time so bold in many of its theses, Origen carried out during his whole life an immense exegetical work: he produced an edition of the Hebrew text of the Bible and its Greek versions, a learned commentary, and popular homilies. Then he crowned his already fruitful life by writing an apologetical work which is the most complete the ante-Nicene Church has left to us. Even this did not exhaust the work of this indefatigable man: at Alexandria first and then at Cæsarea he was the head and usually the only master of the schools he directed; and to all this he added the labour of preaching, during his last years a daily task. When we study more closely Origen's activity, which aroused the admiration of his contemporaries, we soon realise that it sprang from a soul passionately devoted to God. As a child, under Severus, he had wished to be a martyr like his father; thirty years later by his eloquent *Exhortation to Martyrdom* he gave encouragement to his friends imprisoned and tortured by Maximin; finally under Decius he had the proud privilege of suffering for Christ, and shortly after this glorious confession he died.

The reader will not be surprised if we dwell at some length on a life so full and on a system of thought so fruitful.

## § I. THE CATECHIST OF ALEXANDRIA

On the day following the death of Clement of Alexandria, Alexander of Jerusalem wrote thus to Origen: ". . . We knew

those blessed fathers who preceded us and with whom we ourselves shall soon be: Pantaenus, the truly blessed master, and also the venerable Clement, who became my own master and assisted me and possibly others. Through these I came to know you, altogether excelling, my master and my brother.”<sup>2</sup> This piece of information is important: it shows us that Origen was regarded by Alexander of Jerusalem about the year 215 as his master and friend, the successor to the venerable teachers Pantaenus and Clement but greater than these. This testimony coming from a most credible witness tells us something which we do not learn from Origen himself: Pantaenus and even Clement are scarcely named at all in his work, but he continued their activity and their teaching.

### *Parentage and Education*

In his parentage and education, Origen differed greatly from his master. Clement was doubtless an Athenian; Origen was the first Egyptian, as far as we know, to become a Father of the Church.<sup>3</sup> Clement was born and grew up in paganism; from his cradle Origen was a Christian. His father Leonides was very careful to bring him up in a knowledge of the Sacred Scriptures, and the child displayed a precocious curiosity in this respect.<sup>4</sup> Under Severus, Leonides was arrested; Origen himself was so full of desire for martyrdom that his mother was able to hold him back only by hiding his clothes. Not being able to join his father, the child exhorted him to remain firm: “Take care,” he wrote, “not to adopt a different attitude for our sakes.”<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xiv, 8-9.

<sup>3</sup> His very name (“Origen, son of Horus”) links him up with the Egyptian mythology. His surname, “Adamantius,” has often been thought to have been given to Origen because of his strength of mind, but it seems to have been his actual name (Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xiv, 10).

<sup>4</sup> “Leonides in his presence reprimanded him, exhorting him not to seek things above his age or to seek beyond the obvious meaning. But in private he greatly rejoiced, and gave great thanks to God, the source of all good things, because he had thought him worthy to be the father of such a child. It is said that often at that time he went to his child while he was asleep, uncovered his breast, and kissed it respectfully as though the holy Spirit had consecrated it within, and considered himself happy to be his father” (*Hist. eccles.*, VI, ii, 9-11). These details and many others have been transmitted to us by Eusebius, who expresses also his own veneration: “As regards Origen, the very linen of his cradle seems to me to be worthy of memory” (*Ibid.*, VI, ii, 2).

<sup>5</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VI, ii, 5-6.



*The Catechist*

Leonides was beheaded and his goods confiscated. Origen, then seventeen years old, remained with his mother and his six younger brothers.<sup>6</sup> In order to support himself and the family, he began to teach. The persecution had destroyed the Catechetical School, but Origen restored it, first on his own initiative and then at the orders of Bishop Demetrius. The young master, who came thus to replace Clement, was then eighteen years of age. The post was an honourable one, but it was not without its dangers, for the persecution begun by the edict of Severus (202) was still raging, threatening especially the converts and their masters. One pagan, Plutarch, converted by Origen, died a martyr's death, encouraged to the end by his master; he was followed by others still in the catechumenate or else neophytes.<sup>7</sup> Origen "assisted the martyrs not only when they were in prison and while they were being interrogated, until their final sentence, but even afterwards, when they were being led to death. . . . It often happened that when he courageously stepped forward and saluted the martyrs with a kiss, the pagan crowd became very angry and would have rushed upon him; fortunately on each occasion the hand of God came to his assistance and he escaped miraculously."<sup>8</sup>

These heroic times left an indelible trace upon Origen's memory, and he recalled them towards the end of the long period of peace which preceded the Decian persecution:

That was a time when people were really faithful, when martyrdom was the penalty even for entrance into the church, when, from the cemeteries whither we had accompanied the bodies of the martyrs, we entered immediately our meeting places, when the whole Church stood unshakable, when catechumens were catechised in the midst of the martyrdom and deaths of Christians who confessed their faith right to the end, and when these catechumens, overcoming these trials, adhered fearlessly to the living God. Then it was that we remember seeing

<sup>6</sup> A rich Christian lady received him; she gave hospitality also to a heretic of Antioch named Paul. "But Origen, who was obliged to come into contact with him, already gave striking proofs of his own zeal for orthodoxy: though a great number not only of heretics but also of our own people flocked around Paul because he seemed to be learned, Origen himself would never consent to join with him in prayer" (*Ibid.*, VI, ii, 14).

<sup>7</sup> Eusebius mentions Serenus, Heraclides, Hero, another Serenus, and two women, Herais and Potamiana, whose martyrdom was especially glorious (*Hist. eccles.*, VI, iv and v).

<sup>8</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VI, iii, 4.

astonishing and marvellous wonders. Doubtless the faithful were then few in number, but they were truly faithful, following the straight and narrow path which leads to life.<sup>9</sup>

In this School, which was thus a preparation for martyrdom, life was poor and hard: the master taught by example, by necessity, and still more by his ascetical life. Entrusted by the bishop with the whole of the catechetical instruction, he abandoned the teaching of profane letters and sold the manuscripts in his possession for a pension of about sixpence a day. He lived on this sum, leading a most austere life of fasting and vigils, sleeping on only the bare ground, and having only one cloak and no sandals. That was how Origen trained his disciples in the way of Christian perfection and for martyrdom.

In his enthusiasm for the perfect life, Origen unwisely took literally the text in the Gospels which says "there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven" (*Matt.* xix, 12). He was still a young man, and was engaged in preaching the Christian faith not only to men but also to women; he desired by this means to prevent all suspicion, and at the same time he thought that he was carrying out a counsel of the Lord. He kept the matter secret as far as he could; but he informed Demetrius, who, according to Eusebius, admired his courage at the time but later on made it a subject of accusation.<sup>10</sup>

### *Voyage to Rome*

After a dozen years of teaching, Origen went to Rome during the pontificate of Zephyrinus, and in his presence Hippolytus gave a discourse in honour of the Saviour.<sup>11</sup> It is quite likely that friendly

<sup>9</sup> *Hom. in Jerem.*, IV, iii.

<sup>10</sup> This act of self-mutilation, condemned by the civil law (Justin, *Apol.*, I, xxix, cf. the note by Otto), was already disapproved of by the Church, and was later on formally condemned (first canon of the Council of Nicæa, cf. note in Hefele-Leclercq, *Histoire des Conciles*, VI, Vol. I, pp. 529-532). Origen himself wrote later on when explaining this text in Matthew: "If there are other passages, not only in the Old but also in the New Testament, to which we ought to apply the words: 'The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life,' we must allow that they apply especially to this particular text" (*In Matt.*, Vol. XV, 1).

<sup>11</sup> St. Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, lxi, enumerating the works of Hippolytus, wrote: "scripsit . . . de laude Domini Salvatoris, in qua præsente Origene se loqui in Ecclesia significat." Döllinger mentions this in support of his thesis

relations resulted from this first contact between Hippolytus and Origen.<sup>12</sup> His stay in Rome was, however, of short duration, and the master of the Catechetical School soon returned to Alexandria.

### *Biblical and Philosophical Studies*

The period which followed (218-230) was particularly brilliant and fruitful. Origen was at the height of his powers; he enjoyed the confidence of Demetrius,<sup>13</sup> and every day saw still more students attending his lectures. These disciples came from everywhere, from the Hellenic philosophies and from the Gnostic sects; they sought from Origen the interpretation of the Scriptures and a knowledge of God. To satisfy all their desires the master felt the need of a deeper study of the Bible and of divinity. Accordingly he learnt Hebrew and he sought out the various Greek versions of the sacred books in order to compare them. At the same time he took up the study of Hellenic philosophy, as he explains in a fragment of a letter quoted by Eusebius: "When I devoted myself to speaking, the fame of our worth spread abroad, and there came to me heretics and those formed in Greek studies and especially philosophers; it seemed good to me that I should examine thoroughly the doctrines of the heretics, and what philosophers profess to say concerning truth."<sup>14</sup>

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that Origen adhered to the schism of Hippolytus (*Hippolytus und Kallistus*, pp. 255 *et seq.*). Set forth in this form, the thesis is an unlikely one. Cf. Hagemann, *Die Roemische Kirche*, pp. 279 *et seq.*

<sup>12</sup> This was doubtless the cause of a certain misunderstanding between the master of the Catechetical School and the Bishops of Rome who succeeded Zephyrinus. When the question of Origen was raised in Rome by Demetrius, the former had not written to Pontianus so far as we know. But he wrote to Fabian upon his accession; by that time the deaths of Hippolytus and Pontianus had effaced the memory of former disagreements. This enables us to explain why the Bishop of Rome, on receipt of the sentence of Demetrius, called a Roman Synod to discuss Origen's case. The calling of the synod is sufficiently explained by the need for a discussion of the doctrinal complaints, but we can understand it better if the Church of Rome was interested in Origen.

<sup>13</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xiv, 11.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, xix, 12. He adds: "I did this following the example of Pantaenus who before us was helpful to many and was very well trained by the Greeks, and also copying Heraclas, who is now one of the priests of Alexandria. I met the latter at the house of the teacher of philosophical sciences, where he had studied already for five years before I myself began to attend these lectures. During this time, Heraclas abandoned the ordinary dress, which he had worn previously, and put on the mantle of a philosopher, which he has retained until

This letter, written in reply to those who criticised Origen's Hellenic studies, constitutes his defence. Even so, we cannot help noticing the distance between this apologia and the reply which Clement had made to similar complaints. Here there is no longer question of a third Testament: philosophy is not the school in which Origen was first educated; if he frequents it, it is for the reason he also associates with members of heretical sects, namely, in order to understand the doctrines with which his new disciples have been imbued. It is of course true that Origen's studies were carried out thoroughly, for he never did things by halves. One who was a competent judge, though not at all sympathetic towards him, i.e. Porphyry, wrote thus concerning him:

In his conduct he lived as a Christian and in opposition to the laws. But in his beliefs concerning the divinity he was a Greek, applying the art of the Greeks to foreign fables. For he was always studying Plato; the works of Numenius, Cronius, Apollophanes, Longinus, Moderatus, Nicomachus and of those learned in the Pythagorean doctrines constituted his reading, and he made use also of the books of Cheremon the Stoic and Cornutus. It was from these that he learned the allegorical method of the Greek mysteries, which he then adapted to the Scriptures of the Jews.<sup>15</sup>

### *Development of the Catechetical School*

Origen could not cope unaided with the work which every day became more absorbing; accordingly he enlisted the aid of Heraclas and entrusted him with the formation of the beginners, reserving

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now, continuing to study the books of the Greeks as much as possible." This text is valuable because of the information it gives us concerning Pantaenus and especially Heraclas. It describes the latter as wearing the mantle, as Justin and Tertullian had done, and devoting all his time to philosophy.

<sup>15</sup> Quoted by Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xix, 5-9. Eusebius calls attention to the false statement of Porphyry, who accuses Origen of having been born in paganism and of subsequently abandoning it, whereas Ammonius had passed from Christianity to Hellenism. We cannot discuss here the decidedly obscure question of Ammonius; as for Origen, Porphyry's error is plain, though it is not altogether surprising. Porphyry was born in 232, and could scarcely have met Origen; he could not have had much knowledge of his years of teaching at Alexandria, and still less of his infancy. But we can, at any rate, accept what he tells us about Origen's Hellenic culture. On this, see the thesis of Mme A. Miura-Stange, *Celsus und Origenes*, Giessen, 1926; the author tries to show that the religious philosophy of the two is the same. The thesis is certainly an extreme one, but the comparison between the two writers is not without its value. Cf. *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XVII, 1927, pp. 345-347.

for himself the instruction of the more advanced students.<sup>16</sup> This division of the courses in the Catechetical School took place about 215. The young master thus enlisted by Origen had for five years attended the lectures of a philosopher. Thus it was really a professor of philosophy that Origen appointed. The new professor was destined ultimately to become Master in his turn: he took Origen's place at the head of the school in 230, and in 231 became Bishop of Alexandria in place of Demetrius.

Aided thus by Heraclas, Origen redoubled his own activity. One of his disciples, Ambrose, rescued by him from the Valentinian heresy, put his fortune at the service of his master: "More than seven scribes wrote at his dictation and replaced each other at fixed hours; there were also as many copyists, as well as girls accustomed to writing. Ambrose saw generously to the support of all."<sup>17</sup>

The object aimed at by the two friends is thus set forth by Origen, writing to Ambrose:

To-day, under the pretext of gnosis, the heretics set themselves up against the holy Church of Christ, and multiply the volumes of their commentaries in which they pretend to interpret the evangelical and apostolic writings. If we ourselves keep silence, if we do not oppose them with true and sound doctrines, they will attract famished souls who, in the absence of healthy nourishment, will seize upon these forbidden foods which are indeed impure and abominable. . . . In your own case, it was because you could not find masters capable of teaching you a higher doctrine, and because your love for Jesus could not abide an unreasoned and common faith, that you formerly gave yourself up to those doctrines which subsequently you condemned and rejected, as was right.<sup>18</sup>

This passage reveals to us the fundamental motive of Origen's thought: in this city of Alexandria where Greeks, Jews, Gnostics and Catholics are greedy for religious knowledge, and all think to possess its secret, one cannot content oneself with an "unreasoned and common faith"; the pride of a Christian will not suffer this, nor his "love for Jesus." But from whom is this high religious knowledge to be sought, if not from the Master of the Catechetical School? Clement had realised the indispensable necessity of such

<sup>16</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xv. On Heraclas, cf. *supra*, p. 932, n. 14.

<sup>17</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xxiii, 2.

<sup>18</sup> *In Joann.*, V, 8. This passage has been preserved for us in the *Philocalia*.

instruction; he had managed to give an outline of it. But it deserved to be expounded fully, and to this work Origen devoted his life.

### *The Hexapla and the De Principiis*

The task would consist above all of a work of exegesis, for it is in Holy Scripture that God's revelation is mainly found. Origen therefore applied himself to the study of Hebrew, and at the same time prepared an edition of the Hexapla.<sup>19</sup> This great task was but a preparation; once the text had been established, it had to be interpreted, and therein lay the chief task of his life. The earliest commentaries we possess were written at Alexandria: those on the *Psalms*, *Genesis*, and the most important *Commentary on St. John*.<sup>20</sup> This indefatigable writer was not content with his exegetical labours: to these he added while still at Alexandria, shortly after 220, the treatise *De principiis*. Many philosophers were then making collections in which they arranged under different headings the chief philosophical theses affirmed in their schools. Origen began a work conceived according to the same plan, but dealing instead with Christian theology. In particular, he aimed at distinguishing between dogmas transmitted by the apostolic preaching, and questions freely debated.

Origen's presentation of the matter is of great interest, both be-

<sup>19</sup> Besides the Septuagint version, three Greek translations of the Bible were in use at that time, those of Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion. As a result Christians experienced difficulties in their controversies with the Jews. Origen undertook a transcription of the Bible in six columns: the Hebrew text in Hebraic characters, then the same text in Greek characters, and the versions of Aquila, Symmachus, the Septuagint and Theodotion. The work was begun at Alexandria and completed at Caesarea. When Origen wrote to Julius Africanus (chap. V) in 240, he was in the middle of his task; when he commented on St. Matthew (*In Mt. comm.*, XV, 14) he had finished it. This work shows that Origen must have been acquainted with Hebrew, but doubtless he possessed only an elementary knowledge of it, which his friends were able to supplement. Cf. *In Gen.* xii, 4: "ut aiunt qui Hebræa nomina interpretantur"; *In Num.* xiv: "aiunt qui Hebraicas litteras legunt."

<sup>20</sup> The commentary on Ps. ii, 5 is quoted in the treatise *De principiis*, II, iv, 4; so also the commentary on *Gen.*, I, i, *ibid.*, II, iii, 6. Cf. Cadiou, *Introduction au système d'Origène*, p. 13. The chronology of the works of Origen has been determined carefully by Harnack, *Chronologie*, Vol. II, pp. 37-53, and by Bardenhewer, *Geschichte der altkirchl. Litteratur*, Vol. II, pp. 82-146. The first five books of the *Commentary on St. John* were written at Alexandria, but later than the treatise *De principiis*, which is quoted therein. Cf. Cadiou, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-13.

cause of the principles which guide him<sup>21</sup> and the conclusions which he reaches.<sup>22</sup> If we compare this catalogue with the *Placita* of the contemporary philosophers, we are able to appreciate the value of the religious certitudes which the Christian Faith has brought into the world.

This Preface is followed by four books, in which the principal questions thus announced are discussed. The whole constitutes not so much a methodical treatise as a series of dissertations or lecture-notes on the various subjects: we feel that we are in pres-

<sup>21</sup> What Origen tried to find out was the common faith of the Church. Cf. Kattenbusch, *Das Apostolische Symbol*, Vol. II, p. 137: "It is difficult to avoid the impression that Origen was seeking to establish, by means of an independent and free study, what was regarded as certain by Christians subject to the Church. As a starting point he had before his eyes the two Testaments, and he asked only what was to be found therein according to the immediate judgment of all Christians in the Church. In this study he naturally directed his attention to the results of the doctrinal controversies, and in particular the refutation of Marcion and of Gnosticism."

<sup>22</sup> Doctrines are in general certain or doubtful in the degree in which they have already been settled through controversies or still left undecided. Thus:

(a) On God: Against Marcion and the Gnostics, the identity of the God of the two Testaments has been finally established. The spirituality of God has not yet been defined; it is not doubted by Origen, any more than by Clement. But it was otherwise with some of Clement's predecessors (cf. Vol. III, p. 899), and we find in Egypt some addicted to an anthropomorphic view of God as late as the fifth century.

(b) Jesus Christ was born before all creatures; he was the minister of the Father in the creation; he is truly man.

(c) The Holy Spirit is associated with the Father and the Son in honour and dignity. It is not clear whether he was generated or not. The Holy Spirit inspired all the sacred writers.

(d) The human soul: what is beyond doubt are its personal responsibility and its liberty, and the rewards or punishments which await it. Astrology is condemned. The metaphysical question of the origin of the soul is not dealt with.

(e) Angels and devils: "There are angels and good powers, which serve God for the salvation of mankind; but no one has defined clearly when they were created, or what is their condition." "As to the devil and his angels, and enemy powers, the teaching of the Church tells us of their existence, but does not explain clearly their nature and their manner of being. Most people, however, are of the opinion that the devil was once an angel, and that he involved in his defection a great number of angels, now called his own angels."

(f) The world was created, had a beginning, and will come to an end. What existed before, and what will there be afterwards? The ecclesiastical preaching does not answer these questions clearly.

(g) Are the stars animated? The answer is uncertain.

(h) "The whole Church agrees in saying that the Law is spiritual, but the spiritual sense of the Law is known only by those to whom the Holy Spirit has deigned to grant wisdom and knowledge."

The text here summarised is found in the Preface to the first book, iii-x (edit. Koetschau, pp. 9-16); it is translated into French by F. Prat, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-17.

ence of the efforts of an investigator whose thought is courageous but undecided, and who is aware of this. To the difficulties arising out of this method and this attitude of mind are added, for a modern reader, the uncertainties of the text itself. The greater part of the work has come down to us only in the translation by Rufinus, which was particularly criticised by St. Jerome. If we compare the text as conserved in the *Philocalia* with the translation, we notice that more than half of the text has been omitted in the latter. The other chapters certainly receive better treatment; but it is always prudent not to utilise this translation without testing it if we wish to determine the ideas of Origen on controverted points.<sup>23</sup>

Apart from all these doubtful points, what we find underlying the book throughout is the great problem which worried the Gnostics, and which Origen tried with all his might to solve: that of the origin of evil. The Gnostics all tended towards a dualistic solution: Basilides and Valentine had already allowed themselves to be led in its direction; Marcion opened the way to it by his distinction between the two deities; Mani<sup>24</sup> will definitely accept it. Origen fully realises this danger, and the whole aim of his thought is to dispel it. Already in the Preface, the freedom of every rational soul is presented as one of the fundamental theses, certified by the teaching of the Church;<sup>25</sup> he returns to it on several occasions in the course of the work, and devotes to it a good part of Books II and III.<sup>26</sup> This emphasis was justified, and on more than one point Origen gave a useful corrective not only to the gnostic or astrological theses,<sup>27</sup> but also to the speculations of his master Clement.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>23</sup> On the value of Rufinus's translation see the very careful study by G. Bardy, *Recherches sur l'histoire du texte et des versions latines du De principiis d'Origène*, Paris, 1923.

<sup>24</sup> Mani was twenty or thirty years younger than Origen; he began to preach about ten years before Origen's death, and died twenty years after him.

<sup>25</sup> *Pref.*, v. The emphasis on this is the more remarkable in that the baptismal creed does not mention the doctrine; this is one of the points on which we see most clearly what guided Origen in the drawing up of his catalogue of beliefs.

<sup>26</sup> II, ix, 2; III, 1. This long chapter has been preserved for us in the original, in *Philocalia*, ch. xxi.

<sup>27</sup> Already, in the catalogue in the Preface, pp. 12-13, we read: "We are not governed by necessity, nor compelled against our will to do good or evil. For if we are free, some powers may perhaps be able to urge us to sin, and others to help us to save ourselves. But we are not at all compelled to do good or evil, contrary to what is maintained by those who say that the courses and motions of the stars are the causes of human actions." Against Astrology, cf. *In Mathæum*, xiii, 6; *Contra Celsum*, V, xxi, and V, xi. The thesis discussed in these passages is that of the astrologers who make human destiny depend on the



*The Problem of Human Destiny*

At the same time, this reaction went too far, and led Origen into errors which Clement had managed to avoid. These concern, to begin with, the pre-existence of souls. From the time of Plato this idea had led many thinkers astray; it seemed to them to provide the solution of this difficult problem: how can the original inequality of souls be explained without calling in question the equitable Providence of God? Plato had already answered the difficulty by the myth of Er the Armenian, and drew this conclusion: God is not responsible; the soul chose its lot before its birth. Basilides had adopted this hypothesis.<sup>29</sup> Clement had rightly set this solution aside.<sup>30</sup> But Origen returned to it and remained faithful to it. He did of course reject the Pythagorean metempsychosis, which teaches that human souls pass into the bodies of animals;<sup>31</sup> he also set aside Plato's hypothesis of a transference of souls from one human body to another.<sup>32</sup> But he allowed that all

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conjunctions of the stars. But Origen also encountered the opinion of those who attributed to the stars a soul immutably fixed upon the good, e.g. Bardesanes, *Liber legum regionum* (edit. Nau, *Patrologia syriaca*, p. 545): "Observe the sun, the moon, the firmament, and the other creatures which are in some respects greater than we are: they have not received liberty, but all are fixed in such a way that they fulfil only the commandments, and can never depart from them." As Cadiou well points out (*op. cit.*, p. 33), it was to react against such theses that Origen "dwelt at length on the psychology of the stars." In Book I of *De principiis* (vii, 2) he asks whether it is possible to allow such an immutability in creatures, "either in the sun and the stars, as some of our people have thought, or amongst the holy angels, as others of our people have suggested, or lastly in souls, as has been said by heretics."

<sup>28</sup> Clement had allowed the immutability of the primeval angels, *Adumbrationes in I. Joann.*, ii, i: "Hæ namque primitivæ virtutes ac primo creatæ, immobiles, existentes secundum substantiam, cum subjectis angelis et archangelis, cum quibus vocantur æquivoce, diversas operationes efficiunt." He also set forth immutability as the highest point possible in the ascent of the soul: *Strom.*, VII, lvii, 5. Cf. Bk. III, p. 919. He was certainly right in regarding beatitude as incapable of being lost, but instead of recognising that what fixes the soul for ever is its union with God by the Beatific Vision, he imagined a new disposition and, as it were, a new nature, which would make the elect "equal to the angels," "a fixed light, which subsists eternally, in an absolute and complete immutability."

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Bk. III, p. 622.

<sup>30</sup> *Eclogæ propheticæ*, xvii, 1: "We did not exist before God made us. For if one were to accept our pre-existence, we should have to know where we were, and how and why we have come into this world." Cf. Cadiou, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

<sup>31</sup> *Contra Celsum*, V, xlix; VIII, xxx.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, IV, xvii.

souls are eternal, created by God, and equal to one another,<sup>33</sup> and that the world of sense is for them only a place of purification.<sup>34</sup>

Just as the starting point of human destiny is wrongly stated, so also the vision of the future is no longer that set forth by the Church. To safeguard the liberty of rational creatures, Origen thinks it necessary to regard them as ever capable of renewal; the sensible world, created by God for the purification of fallen souls, will come to an end when all will have been restored to their original purity.<sup>35</sup> Thus, under the influence of divine Providence, the world will end in the triumph of the Good. But after this present world others will follow, the results of new failures, due like the first to the weakness of free creatures.<sup>36</sup> Following out the logic of the system, some even came to allow the salvation of the devil: Origen was blamed for this, but he protested that "even an idiot could not hold such a thesis."<sup>37</sup>

### *The Hierarchy of Divine Persons*

We can easily realise the effects produced by this daring conception of the world and human destiny in the Christian Church at Alexandria. It would attract some, but cause alarm to many others. Other speculations, no less dangerous, were to be found also in the treatise *De principiis* and still more in the *Commentary on St. John*: these concerned the heavenly world and especially the

<sup>33</sup> *De principiis*, II, ix, 6: "Since God is the cause of all created beings, and there is in him neither variety nor change nor impotence, he has created all rational creatures equal and similar, for there was no reason to make them unequal and diverse. But because rational creatures were endowed with free will, this itself has led individuals either to progress by imitating God, or else to fall away by negligence."

<sup>34</sup> According to Origen, no nature can live unless it is united to a body, except the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, who alone are absolutely incorporeal. But matter is diversified according to the spirits to which it is destined to be united: "when it is destined for inferior spirits, it solidifies and becomes thickened in such a way that it forms the various kinds of matter of this visible world; but when it is put to the service of the higher and happier intelligence, it shines with the brilliancy of the heavenly bodies, and acts as clothing for the angels of God and the sons of the resurrection." (*Ibid.*, II, ii, 2; cf. I, v, 3.)

<sup>35</sup> *De principiis*, III, vi, 6.

<sup>36</sup> This passage, suppressed by Rufinus, is quoted by Jerome, *Epist. ad Avitum*, x (transcribed by Koetschau, in note on *De principiis*, III, vi, 3, p. 284).

<sup>37</sup> Fragment of a letter to his friends, quoted by Rufinus, *De adulteratione librorum Origenis*.

realm of deity. The vital truth that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit transcend all other beings was always affirmed by Origen, and we find it already in the treatise *De principiis*.<sup>38</sup> But we must also allow that there is in this treatise a hierarchical conception of the divine Persons which endangers their equality and their consubstantiality.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Absolute immateriality is allowed in no creature, but only in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit: II, ii, 2 (cf. p. 939, n. 34); IV, iii, 15. These texts are, it is true, found in Rufinus's translation, but even so they cannot be called in question, for the thesis is a familiar one in Origen. On the other hand, it would be unwise to make use of I, iii, 7; cf. the note by Koetschau, p. 60. Again, the Trinity alone is immutable in goodness: I, v, 3; cf. I, ii, 13; I, vi, 2; *In Num. hom.*, XI, 8 (Rufinus's translation). In *Contra Celsum*, VI, xlv, we find a similar idea, but this is in connection with God, and is not applied precisely to the three Persons of the Trinity: "It is impossible that the good which is accidental and produced should be like to the Good who is goodness by essence." The Greek texts concerning the Son and the Holy Spirit tend to separate these two Persons from the Father, who alone is good: *In Psalm.* cxxi; *De principiis*, I, ii, 12, fragment quoted by Justinian; cf. Jerome, *Ad Avitum epist.*, ii; *In Mt.* xv, 10; cf. also on this text, Huet, *Origeniana*, II, ii, qu 2, 15.

<sup>39</sup> In the treatise *De principiis*, this hierarchy is manifested especially in the actions of the divine Persons, which are of unequal extent: "God the Father, containing all things, attains to all beings, communicating to each one the being it possesses as its own. By an action inferior to that of the Father, the Son attains only to rational beings, for he is the second after the Father. By still lesser action, the Holy Spirit acts only on the saints. From this it follows that the power of the Father is greater than that of the Son and the Holy Spirit; that of the Son is superior to that of the Holy Spirit; and that of the Holy Spirit is greater than that of all other holy beings" (I, iii, 3). Cf. *In Isaiam*, fr. (Pamphil., *Apol.*, 5); *Contra Celsum*, VIII, xv: "We, who say that the sensible world belongs to the one who has made all things, affirm clearly that the Son is not more powerful than the Father but is inferior to him. And we say this in obedience to him who said: 'The Father, who has sent me, is greater than I.'"

In consequence of this hierarchical conception, Origen represents the Son and the Holy Spirit as intermediaries between the Father and creatures: *In Joann.*, XIII, xxv, pp. 151-153: ". . . As for us, who believe the Saviour when he said: 'The Father, who has sent me, is greater than I,' and who for that reason did not allow that the word 'good' should be applied to himself in its full, true and perfect sense, but attributed it to the Father and gave him thanks, condemning him who would glorify the Son to excess—we say that the Saviour and the Holy Spirit are without comparison and are very much superior to all things that are made, but also that the Father is even more above them than they are themselves above creatures, even the highest." Cf. Huet, II, ii, 2-7. Maran, in his note (*ibid.*), suggests that the copyists have here omitted a negation. Even if this were the case, we should still have the affirmation of the distance separating the Father from the Son, and the Son from creatures. This idea is found also in the *Commentary on Matthew*, xv, 10, but here the distance between Father and Son is less than the distance between the Son and creatures.

This idea appears in the treatise *De principiis*, in spite of all the corrections made by Rufinus; it is also very marked in the *Commentary on St. John*; it will dominate the whole theological work of Origen, and he will even regard it as the rule governing Christian worship.

This theological speculation, so bold and in many of its features so imprudent, will have its echoes for more than a century in the whole of the East. Some doctors will derive from it a fruitful impulse, others will be deeply upset by it. But at the commencement there was no sign of these controversies. The danger in the Origenist hypotheses was as yet only imperfectly realised; people admired the strength of the work of the scholar and the exegete; they admired still more the sincerity of his Christian fervour, and they had confidence in him.

### *Journey to Arabia and Palestine*

Already Origen's reputation was spreading not only in Alexandria but throughout the whole Church. During the pontificate of Zephyrinus he went to Rome;<sup>40</sup> shortly after his return to Alexandria he was summoned to Arabia;<sup>41</sup> "A soldier brought letters

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From this also arises the distinction between the stages of the highest religious knowledge: after getting to know the Father in his image, that is, in the Son, we shall know him in himself: *In Joann.*, XX, vii, 47; XXXII, xxiv, 359; XIX, vi, 34-39; XIII, iii, 18-19: "This living well, which springs up in the one who drinks the water which Jesus gives, springs up unto life eternal, and perhaps beyond life eternal, to the Father, who is beyond life eternal. For Christ is the life, but he who is greater than Christ is greater than life."

Again, we find this hierarchical conception applied to worship. *De principiis*, I, iii, 4: "The Hebrew says that the two seraphim with six wings described by Isaias, who cry to one another saying 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts,' are the one Son of God and the Holy Spirit. And we ourselves think that the text in the *Canticle of Habacuc*, 'Thou shalt be known in the midst of two animals,' refers to Christ and the Holy Spirit." Also *In Isaïam*, hom. I, 2: "Who are these two Seraphim? My Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit." Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, p. 633; *La foi populaire et la théologie savante*, in *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique*, Vol. XX, 1924, pp. 19-33. This Origenist conception of Christian worship will have its echoes in the liturgy. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 27-33.

Lastly, we must mention another Subordinationist conception, more technical in form, but with a very similar significance: the Father is absolute unity; the Son is multiple, at least virtually: *In Joann.*, I, xx, 18; II, ii, 18; II, xviii, 126; VI, vi, 38; I, xix, 121; *Contra Celsum*, V, xxii; V, xxiv; V, xxxix; VI, lxiv. Cf. *infra*, p. 971, n. 68.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 931.

<sup>41</sup> Shortly before 215.

to Demetrius Bishop of Alexandria and to the prefect of Egypt, in which the governor of Arabia requested them to send Origen to him as soon as possible, as he wished to discuss doctrines with him.”<sup>42</sup> Only twelve years had elapsed since the publication of the edict of Severus; and already a sympathetic curiosity towards Christianity was being manifested by high imperial officers. Origen successfully fulfilled his mission, and returned speedily to Alexandria. On his arrival he found the city terrorised and decimated by Caracalla, who had in 215 given it up to pillage following a riot, expelling all foreigners, closing the schools, and forbidding spectacles.<sup>43</sup> Ambrose, originally of Antioch, had to depart; he seems to have gone to Palestine, and Origen, doubtless involved in the measures adopted against the philosophers and schoolmasters, accompanied him. The Bishop of Jerusalem at that time was Alexander, a disciple and friend of Clement of Alexandria. We know with what pleasure and indeed with what admiration he welcomed Origen.<sup>44</sup> Theoctistus of Cæsarea was no less favourable. At the request of the bishops, Origen explained the holy Scriptures in church, in presence of all the people. As he was not a priest, Demetrius made a complaint to his colleagues in Palestine. They sent a fairly sharp answer: Alexander and Theoctistus pointed out that on several occasions already laymen had been invited by bishops to give the homily. Demetrius recalled the master of the Catechetical School to his post; Origen returned to Alexandria and took up once more his accustomed work. This incident was a prelude to the conflict which was to break out some fifteen years later.

At the beginning of the reign of Alexander Severus (222-235), the Emperor's mother, Mammæa, requested Origen to go to Antioch in order that she might consult him on many questions “concerning the glory of the Lord and the divine teaching.” Origen passed some time there, expounded to her the Christian doctrine, and then “hastened to return to his accustomed occupations.”<sup>45</sup>

<sup>42</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xix, 15.

<sup>43</sup> Dion Cassius, *Hist. rom.*, lxxvii, 23.

<sup>44</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xxi, 3-4. The sympathetic attitude of Mammæa towards Christianity shown by this action and doubtless developed through the talks with Origen, helps to explain the attitude of the emperor Alexander, then quite a young man and very dependent on his mother. Cf. *infra*, p. 946.

<sup>45</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xxiii, 4.

### *Ordination of Origen*

About 230, Origen was called to Greece; on his way he was ordained priest at Cæsarea by "the bishops of this country." This step, much more serious than the former, aroused in Demetrius an indignation that nothing could appease. Origen was made aware of this as soon as he returned to Alexandria. Eusebius attributes this indignation to jealousy,<sup>46</sup> but that is evidently a partial view, for Origen belonged both by birth and by his position to the Church of Alexandria, and Demetrius had a right to complain that he had been raised to the priesthood without his knowledge. The irregularity resulting from Origen's mutilation would be another ground of complaint. Finally, there was reason to criticise Origen for temerarious teaching. This last accusation was the most serious of all, and it was against this that the Master of the Catechetical School uttered his chief protest. Some doctrines especially scandalous, such as the salvation of the devil, were rejected by him as calumnies;<sup>47</sup> other temerities were admitted but explained<sup>48</sup> as essays which ought to have remained private, and which Ambrose had unwisely published.

### *The Condemnation*

When Origen was thus sending his defence to the Egyptian clergy and to Pope Fabian, he had already had to yield to the storm and had taken refuge in Palestine. A Synod had been called together at Alexandria; it had decreed that Origen was banished

<sup>46</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VI, viii, 4-5. St. Jerome mentions this rupture on many occasions, but from a standpoint which varies according to his dispositions towards Origen. In 384, in a letter to Paula, he speaks like Eusebius (*Épist.*, xxxiii, 4); so also in 392 in the *De viris illustribus*, liv. But from the year 400 he brings out another side of the question, i.e. the doctrinal complaints formulated against Origen: in his *Apologia adversus libros Rufini*, II, xviii, he quotes a fragment of a letter in which Origen complains to the clergy of Egypt that he had been falsely accused of blasphemous doctrines and condemned on that account. Cf. Rufinus, *De adulteratione librorum Origenis*. About the same date (400), Jerome wrote thus to Pammachius: "Origen himself, in his letter to Fabian Bishop of Rome, expresses regret at having written such things, and puts the blame on Ambrose, who published things which ought to have remained unpublished."

<sup>47</sup> In his letter to the Egyptian clergy, quoted by Jerome and Rufinus, *supra*, p. 939.

<sup>48</sup> In his letter to Pope Fabian (*ibid.*).

from the city, that he could not teach there, or even reside there, but it had not deposed him from the priesthood. Nevertheless Demetrius, supported by some Egyptian bishops, declared him deprived of the priesthood.<sup>49</sup> The Bishop of Alexandria communicated this sentence to the whole episcopate; the Bishop of Rome, Pontian, called a council, which upheld it; the majority of the bishops did likewise. But the Bishops of Palestine, Achaia, Arabia, Phœnicea and Cappadocia did not adhere to it.<sup>50</sup>

Thus, in this unfortunate conflict there appears already a disagreement between the great churches of the West and those of the East. In Rome and in the whole Western world which Hellenism had influenced for some time but from which already it was withdrawing, the theology of Origen would never succeed in obtaining a footing. In the East, on the contrary, it will exercise a powerful attraction, especially in the third century; in the fourth, Arianism, by seeking support from it, will render it suspect to many Catholics.<sup>51</sup> In this disagreement we must notice the position of the Church of Alexandria: it sides with Rome and the West. This will already foreshadow its attitude when the Arian crisis will break out within its own boundaries.

Shortly after the condemnation of Origen, Demetrius died.<sup>52</sup> His successor was the priest Heraclas, whom Origen had appointed as assistant, and who after his condemnation had taken his place at the head of the Catechetical School. It seems that Origen tried at this time to return to Alexandria and to take up his teaching once more, but Heraclas upheld the sentence of Demetrius.<sup>53</sup>

In 247 Heraclas died in his turn, and was succeeded by St.

<sup>49</sup> That is how the facts are recounted by Photius, *Cod.* CXVIII (Migne, *P.G.*, Vol. CIII, 397), following Pamphilus.

<sup>50</sup> Jerome, *Epist.*, xxxiii, 4. Jerome does not mention Cappadocia, but the attitude of Firmilian of Cæsarea is a sufficient indication of his loyal attachment to Origen.

<sup>51</sup> But not to all, nevertheless. The great care with which St. Basil and St. Gregory composed the *Philocalia* is a sufficient indication of their attachment to the master. At the same time St. Basil makes reservations concerning the Origenist theology of the Holy Spirit (*De Spiritu sancto*, lxxiii).

<sup>52</sup> Possibly by the year 230 (cf. Preuschen, art. *Origenes* in *Prot. Real-Encycl.*, Vol. XIV, p. 475) or at the latest in 232.

<sup>53</sup> These facts are attested by texts of a late date, but whose agreement is by no means to be neglected: Photius, *Interrogat.*, ix; Gennadius, *De viris illustribus*, xxxiv; Theophilus, quoted by Justinian, *Epist. ad Mennam* (Hardouin, III, 263; cf. *Mystagogia s. Petri Alex.*, in Routh, *Reliquæ sacræ*, Vol. IV, p. 81). Cf. Harnack, art. *Heraclas* in *Prot. Real-Encycl.*, Vol. VII, p. 693; Hagemann, *op. cit.*, pp. 283-285; Bardenheuer, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 80.

Dionysius. He, however, took no steps to recall to Alexandria the man who had nevertheless been his own master.<sup>54</sup> But in the time of the Decian persecution, Origen was to receive, after his painful confession of the Faith, a friendly letter from the Bishop of Alexandria.<sup>55</sup>

These facts enable us to understand better the significance and the motives of the sentence of Demetrius: if his two successors, sometime pupils of Origen, did nothing to recall their master to Alexandria, it must have been because his dismissal was motivated not merely by the personal jealousy of Demetrius, but also by the Church's own interests.

## § 2. THE MASTER OF CÆSAREA

The condemnations pronounced by men who had been most closely connected with Origen—Demetrius, who thirty years before had appointed him head of the Catechetical School, and Heraclas, who had been his disciple and his collaborator—together with the exile which removed him from the Church in which his father had died a martyr's death and in which he himself had taught for thirty years, and the pronouncements against him emanating from the whole world, were to Origen himself a terrible blow. Yet he says little about them in his works, and when he does so it is with moderation. The most explicit passage is found in the *Preface* of the Sixth Tome of St. John:

In spite of the storm stirred up against us at Alexandria, we had completed the fifth tome, for Jesus commanded the winds and the waves. We had already begun the sixth when we were torn from the land of Egypt, saved by the hand of God the deliverer, who had formerly withdrawn his people from thence. Since that time the enemy has redoubled his violence, publishing his new letters, truly hostile to the Gospel, and letting loose upon us all the evil winds of Egypt. Hence reason counselled us to remain ready for combat, and to keep untouched the highest part of ourselves, until tranquillity, restored to our mind, should enable us to add to our former labours the rest of our studies on Scripture. If we had returned to this task at an unseasonable time, we might have feared that painful reflections would bring the tempest right into our soul. Moreover, the absence of our usual

<sup>54</sup> Feltoe, *Dionysius*, p. xxv.

<sup>55</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xlvii, 2. Cf. *infra*, p. 985.



secretaries prevented us from dictating the commentary. But now that the multitude of heated writings published against us has been extinguished by God, and our soul, accustomed to the misfortunes which come to pass in consequence of the heavenly word, has learnt to support more peaceably the snares prepared for us—now that we have, so to speak, found once more a calm sky, we do not wish to delay any longer in dictating the rest, and we pray God our Master to make himself heard in the sanctuary of our soul, so that the commentary we have begun on the Gospel of John may be completed. May God hear our prayer that we may be able to write the whole of this discourse, and that no further accident may interrupt and break the continuity of Scripture.<sup>1</sup>

This moving passage well brings out Origen's great grief, and also his efforts to overcome it and continue his work in peace.<sup>2</sup> In Palestine he was in friendly surroundings, and protected by bishops who admired him, Theoctistus of Cæsarea and Alexander of Jerusalem, and from thence his fame spread over the whole East.

### *Persecution of Maximin*

The Empire was then in the hands of Alexander Severus. This young emperor displayed towards Christianity not only a wide toleration but also sympathy, and even a superstitious veneration;<sup>3</sup> his household, if we may believe Eusebius,<sup>4</sup> "consisted for the most part of believers."

This growing sympathy in the Empire for Christianity was

<sup>1</sup> *In Joann.*, VI, 1, 8-11. Origen adds that he has begun again the preface to the sixth tome, because he had not been able to bring from Alexandria what he had already written, as his departure had been too sudden.

<sup>2</sup> We can compare with this passage a fragment of a letter from Origen to his friends, quoted by St. Jerome, *Adv. Rufinum*, ii, 18: "Is it necessary to recall the discourses of the prophets threatening and reprimanding the shepherds and the elders, the priests and the princes of the people? You can find them without our help in the Holy Scriptures, and convince yourselves that our own time is perhaps one of those to which these words apply: 'Believe not a friend, and trust not in a prince' (*Micheas*, vii, 5), and also this other oracle which is being fulfilled in our own days: 'The leaders of my people have not known me; they are foolish and senseless children; they are ready to do evil but know not how to do good' (*Jeremias*, iv, 22). Such men deserve pity rather than hate, and we must pray for them rather than curse them, for we have been created, not to curse but to bless."

<sup>3</sup> Dion Cassius, *Hist. rom.*, lxxv, 13; lxxviii, 12. Lambridius, *Alex. Sev.*, xxii; xxviii; xxix; xliii-xliv; xlix.

<sup>4</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xxviii, 1.

suddenly interrupted. On 18th February, 235, Alexander Severus and his mother were assassinated; in hatred of his predecessor, Maximin persecuted the Christians and applied to this persecution the savage brutality of his character. Close friends of Origen, Ambrose and Proctetetus, a priest of the Church of Cæsarea, suffered greatly and courageously confessed the Faith. Origen addressed to them his book *On Martyrdom*; in this moving and lively exhortation we find once again the enthusiasm with which thirty years earlier the son of Leonides had encouraged his father to suffer death.<sup>5</sup>

### *St. Gregory Thaumaturgus*

Origen himself was not affected by the persecution;<sup>6</sup> during the three years it lasted (235-238) he continued his teaching at Cæsarea. It was at that time that he numbered amongst his disciples a man who was to be one of the great apostles of the East, St. Gregory Thaumaturgus.

Theodore, who subsequently changed his name to Gregory, was born in Pontus, of a distinguished but pagan family. When fourteen years of age, after the death of his father, he came to know Christianity and accepted it. He wanted to become a lawyer, and set out for Beirut with his brother Athenodorus, in order to study law there. The two brothers took their sister with them as far as Cæsarea, so that she could join her husband, who had been appointed assessor to the Governor of Syrian Palestine. At Cæsarea they heard of Origen and his teaching; they attached themselves to him, and gave up their project of studying law. After five years passed in Origen's school the two brothers returned to Pontus, where both, though still young, became bishops. Before leaving

<sup>5</sup> Fragments of this work are given in a French translation in Bardy, *Origène*, pp. 296-307.

<sup>6</sup> Palladius (*Lausiac History*, cxlvii) narrates that from 235 to 237 or 238 Origen lived at Cæsarea in Cappadocia, hidden in the house of the Christian lady named Juliana. This story is contradicted by the testimony of St. Gregory Thaumaturgus. His *Discourse* was pronounced in 238; he had just followed the teaching of Origen at Cæsarea for five years, and he says nothing of any absence or any interruption. This decisive testimony is confirmed by what Eusebius tells us (*Hist. eccles.*, VI, xxviii): only the friends of Origen were affected by the persecution; he sent them his book *On Martyrdom*; he spoke of the persecution in Tome XXII of his *Commentary on St. John* and in various letters; if he himself had been the subject of persecution Eusebius would not have failed to say so.

Cæsarea, Gregory addressed to his master a *Discourse* of farewell and thanks.

### *Origen's Teaching as seen by a Disciple*

In this eulogy, pulsating with grateful admiration, the young man tells how he was first won by Origen and then trained by him.<sup>7</sup> This testimony reveals to us better than all the accounts in Eusebius the pedagogical method of Origen and his incomparable ascendancy. The master was not merely a professor but above all an educator; he transformed the person who gave himself up to him:

When he saw that his efforts were not fruitless, he began to dig the soil, to turn it over, to water it, to rake it over, and to use all his art and all his care in order to work upon us; everything that there was in the nature of thorns, thistles, or evil weeds, and all that our minds produced like a virgin forest, he cut back or extracted by his reprimands and orders; he corrected us after the manner of Socrates, and subdued us by his words if he found us like wild horses, impatient of the bit, rushing off the road, and running hither and thither, until by persuasion or compulsion, curbing us by his speech as by a bit put into our mouths, he succeeded in training us. At first this could not be done without pain and suffering for us; neither custom nor exercise had taught us to follow reason; but nevertheless he went on forming us by his discourses and gradually purified us (vii, 96).

Side by side with this moral training, an encyclopædic teaching was given: all the sciences were laid under contribution, dialectics, criticism, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy (ii-viii). Philosophy crowned this lengthy preparation: the disciples of Origen were to read all the philosophers except the atheists:

He was very careful not to confine us to the study of any one single system; he went through them all, not wishing to allow us to be ignorant of any portion whatsoever of Hellenic science. He himself went before us, holding us by the hand, and we followed in his footsteps. When we came to a turn in the thought in which a fallacy was hidden under deceitful appearances, he used to warn us, as one accustomed to these difficulties by long experience and a constant application to philosophical studies. He was like one who is in a safe place and who

<sup>7</sup> Migne, P.G., Vol. X, 1049-1104, ed. Koetschau, Freiburg, 1894. [English translation by Metcalfe. S.P.C.K. 1920.—Tr.]

stretches out his hand to others and lifts them up when they are about to be submerged by the waves. Our master acted in that way: he gathered up for our instruction whatever each philosopher had taught that was true and useful, concentrating especially on the things which might develop piety amongst men. On such matters he did not desire us to be attached to any particular philosopher, however wise he might be regarded amongst men, but only to God and his prophets (xiv-xv).

Thus this whole course, encyclopædic and philosophical, was but a preparation for the study of Holy Scripture which for Origen was the most important subject of all, constituting Theology. And here the master expressed himself completely, not only by the richness of his scholarship, but above all by the depth of his religious intuition:

He himself used to interpret the Prophets and clarified all the obscure and puzzling passages such as occur frequently in the holy Scriptures. . . . He clarified and threw light upon all the enigmas he encountered, because he knew how to listen to God and to understand him. One might say that these enigmas presented no difficulty to him, and contained nothing that he did not understand. Of all the men of to-day, of whom I have heard or whom I have known, there has not been one who was able as he was to contemplate the purity of the divine oracles, to receive their light into his own soul, and to teach them to others. This is because the universal Head, he who spoke through the Prophets beloved by God, and who inspires all prophecy and all mystical and divine discourse, honoured him as a friend, and set him up as a master. Through others, he spoke in enigmas, but through Origen he gave the understanding of them, and whatever he, the Master supremely worthy of belief, had by his royal authority ordained or revealed, this he gave to this man to expound, and to explain the oracles, so that if anyone were hard of heart and incredulous or still desirous to learn, he was able to learn from this man and was in a sense compelled to understand and to believe and to follow God. If he did all this, it was in my opinion by the communication of the divine Spirit; for those who prophesy and those who understand the prophets need the same power, and no one can understand a prophet unless the same Spirit who has prophesied give him the understanding of his discourse. That is the meaning of the words we read in the holy books: "He who shutteth can alone open, and none other"—the divine word opens by manifesting those enigmas which are closed. This wonderful gift was received by this man from God; he was given by heaven the marvellous destiny of being to men the interpreter of the words of God, understanding what God says in

the way in which God says it, and expounding it to men in a way that men can understand. Thus, there was nothing inexplicable, hidden, or inaccessible to us; we were able to follow every saying, barbarian or Greek, mysterious or public, divine or human; we were able in all freedom to run through all, to examine all, and to collect together and enjoy all the good things of the soul. Whether it came from some ancient source of the truth or from some other name or work, we drew from it abundantly and with full freedom wonderful and magnificent thoughts. To express the whole matter in brief, all this was for us a veritable Paradise, an image of the great Paradise of God, in which we did not have to work upon the soul below, nor to feed our bodies by fattening them; we had only to develop the riches of the soul, like beautiful plants which we had planted ourselves or which had been planted in us by the Cause of all things, in joy and abundance (xv, 174-183).

This eulogy does honour to the disciple as much as to his master. But at the same time we cannot help noticing a certain exaggeration, whether in the praise of Hellenic philosophy, or in the repeated praise of Origen himself as the unique master and sole interpreter of the Scriptures. Origen doubtless was himself aware of this exaggeration. We have a letter which he addressed to Gregory shortly after the return of the young man to his own country;<sup>8</sup> we find in it some points which appear to be discreet corrections of the *Discourse*,<sup>9</sup> especially on the dangers which may be found in the good things of Egypt, and the necessity of prayer to understand the Scriptures. At the end of the letter, Origen gives this exhortation:

As for you, my son, apply yourself above all to the reading of the holy Scriptures. "Apply yourself," I say, for we need great attention when we read the holy books so that we may neither say nor think anything incautious concerning them. Be attentive to the reading of the divine Scriptures, with faith and the intention of pleasing God; knock if the doors are shut, and the porter will open to you, as Jesus said: "The porter will open the door to him." Being thus attentive to the divine reading, seek with an upright heart and a very firm faith in God, the spirit of the holy Scriptures, so often hidden. But do not content yourself with knocking at the door and seeking: the most necessary thing for the understanding of divine matters is prayer. The

<sup>8</sup> This letter is later than the *Discourse* (238) but earlier than Gregory's elevation to the episcopate (243).

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Koetschau, *Introduction* to the edition of the *Discourse*, pp. xv-xvii.

Saviour, when exhorting us, did not content himself with saying to us: "Knock and it shall be opened unto you, seek and you shall find"; he also said: "Ask and it shall be given unto you." Because of my fatherly affection towards you I do not fear to speak to you thus. Whether I have done well or not, God and his Christ know, and he who has a part in the spirit of God and the spirit of Christ. May you yourself have part therein, an ever increasing part, so that you may not merely say: "We are become participators in Christ" but also "We are become participators in God."

Apart from these last words, which can hardly fail to give rise to some misgivings, especially when they come from Origen's pen, we can only praise the piety and wisdom of this answer. It corrects with fatherly discretion whatever was incautious in the enthusiasm of the young man. These two documents, placed side by side, clarify each other, and both of them make known to us a pedagogical method of exceptional efficiency.<sup>10</sup>

Moreover, it must be carefully borne in mind that the value of the method is dependent entirely upon the worth of the man himself. Like Socrates, whom Gregory recalls, and like Plotinus, who will very soon be teaching in Rome, Origen transformed his disciples still more by his personal influence than by his scholarship. He was not a lecturer who merely appeared from time to time before an audience; he was a master and tutor who lived constantly with his disciples.

### *The Eastern Bishops and Origen*

The admiration of the young disciple for his master shows how great was the latter's influence, and how much he was loved. Several other testimonies confirm this, and they come from the most respected bishops in the East. Among them we find Firmilian, Bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia. His authority was great, and soon afterwards Cyprian will invoke it,<sup>11</sup> and still later his intervention will be sought against the unworthy Bishop of Antioch,

<sup>10</sup> A good judge has written: "There is no parallel to the picture in ancient times. And when every allowance has been made for the partial enthusiasm of a pupil, the view which it offers of a system of Christian training actually realised exhibits a type which we cannot hope to surpass. The ideal of Christian education and the ideal of Christian philosophy were fashioned together" (*Dict. of Christian Biography*, Vol. IV, p. 102).

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Bk. III, p. 865.

Paul of Samosata. Firmilian, who was thus so greatly respected, became a disciple of Origen: "he first of all summoned Origen to Cæsarea for the good of the churches, then he went to be near to him in Judea, and passed some time with him in order to perfect himself in divine things."<sup>12</sup> As for the leaders of the Palestinian episcopate, Alexander of Jerusalem and Theoctistus of Cæsarea, these remained to the end the faithful protectors of the man they had ordained priest: "they attached themselves to him as to a unique master, and they entrusted him with the explanation of the holy Scriptures and with the whole of ecclesiastical teaching."<sup>13</sup>

Thus, while Alexandria expelled him and the West echoed this condemnation, Origen was in the East the object of enthusiastic admiration; he suffered on the one hand from a severity which he considered unjustified, and on the other hand received an admiration which he did not think he had merited. In a Homily on St. Luke, he refers in passing to the excessive honour which the Marcionites rendered to St. Paul by identifying the apostle with the Spirit of Truth. He continues:

We ourselves also suffer from such exaggerations. Many who love us more than we deserve give to our discourses and to our doctrine praises of which we cannot approve. Others calumniate our books and attribute to us opinions which to our knowledge we have never held. Those who love us too much and those who hate us both stray from the rule of truth.<sup>14</sup>

### § 3. THE PREACHER AND THE MORALIST

#### *The Homilies*

In the midst of these eulogies and criticisms, the priest of Cæsarea carried on his work—not only the task of education and teaching which we have just described, and the writing of books to which we have already referred and of which we shall speak again, but also the work of preaching, which became ever more pressing. The explanation of the Scriptures was given to the people at least twice a week, on Wednesdays and Fridays;<sup>1</sup> it very soon

<sup>12</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xxvii.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *In Luc. hom.*, xxv.

<sup>1</sup> Socrates, *Hist. eccles.*, V, 22.

became a daily task, and took place even several times a day. The text was sometimes taken from the lessons of the day,<sup>2</sup> at others it was given to the preacher by the bishops presiding at the meeting,<sup>3</sup> or resulted from a request on the part of the listeners.<sup>4</sup>

This assiduous preaching, carried out for such a long period, proves not only the zeal of the preacher himself but also the faithful docility of the Christians. Nevertheless, the preacher complains more than once of those who are absent, and also of those present: many come to the church only on festival days; others listen to the reading of holy Scripture but leave as soon as it is finished without staying for the sermon; those who remain are often inattentive; they carry on in the church their ordinary conversations; they turn their backs at the reading of the Bible and the sermon. "How," says Origen, "can I put pearls in deaf ears and those who turn away?"<sup>5</sup> He therefore has to reprove his hearers, and he does so, but regretfully and without harshness: "It may perhaps seem very severe, but can I cover with plaster a wall which is collapsing?"<sup>6</sup>

These severities spare no one, whether bishops or priests, or even the preacher himself. In a homily on Genesis, speaking of the priests of Pharaoh, Origen says:

Do you want to know the difference between the priests of God and the priests of Pharaoh? Pharaoh gave lands to his priests; the Lord says to his own: "I am your lot." Pay attention, readers, all you priests of the Lord. . . . Let us hear what Christ our Lord enjoins on his priests: "Every one of you that doth not renounce all that he possesseth, cannot be my disciple." I tremble when I say these words, for above all it is myself that I accuse, myself that I condemn. Christ refuses to regard as his disciple whosoever possesses something and does not renounce all that he possesses. What are we doing? How can we read this and expound it to the people, we who not only do not renounce that which we have, but also desire to acquire what we never possessed before we came to Christ? Because our consciences accuse us, are we able to dissimulate that which is written? I do not want to make myself doubly

<sup>2</sup> *In Num. hom.*, xv, 1; *In Jesu Nave hom.*, xx; *In I Sam. hom.*, ii.

<sup>3</sup> *In Ezech. hom.*, xiii, 1.

<sup>4</sup> *In Num. hom.*, xv, 1.

<sup>5</sup> *In Gen. hom.*, x, 1; *In Exod. hom.*, xii, 2; *hom.*, xiii, 3. As Delarue points out, these texts of Origen were quoted by Jonas of Orleans, *De Institutione laicali*, cap. xiii. Cf. Harnack, *Der kirchengeschichtliche Ertrag der exegetischen Arbeiten des Origenes*, Leipzig, 1918 and 1919, Vol. I, pp. 68 et seq.

<sup>6</sup> *In Gen. hom.*, x, 1.



guilty. I confess, yes even before all the people who hear me—I confess that that is written, although I am aware that I have not yet fulfilled it. But at least to-day, after this warning, let us make haste to accomplish it; let us hasten to pass from the priests of Pharaoh who have earthly possessions, to the priests of the Lord who have no part here below, but whose lot is the Lord.<sup>7</sup>

### *The Religious Ideal*

This passage, chosen from amongst many, gives us the note sounded in the homilies of Origen. These are of great importance for the history of exegesis,<sup>8</sup> and more generally for the history of the Church of the third century.<sup>9</sup> But they also reveal to us with a moving sincerity<sup>10</sup> the religious aspirations of the priest of Cæsarea. If we link up his oratorical output, which is considerable, with his pedagogical method and his theological labours, we can penetrate his inmost thought, and the elevated religious aims which were the mainspring of his whole life. These aspirations were, as we have seen, expressed also in a metaphysic which contains some dangerous theses; the best disciples of Origen will be able to separate these and put them on one side. In our own rapid survey we shall try to set them forth as Origen himself conceived, lived, and preached them.<sup>11</sup>

God, who alone is good, created spiritual beings who are good and pure. And yet a glance at the world is sufficient to show that it is corrupt. All these defects have resulted from an original fall; the souls who live in matter must purify themselves while there from faults committed in a previous existence. The original sin consisted in forgetfulness of God; the soul, created by him to contemplate him, allowed the glow of this first contemplation to become dimmed; it defaulted by taking pleasure in itself and allowing itself

<sup>7</sup> *In Gen. hom.*, xvi, 5. Cf. Harnack, *op. cit.*, p. 70, who mentions a similar statement by a certain presbyter, quoted by Irenæus, *Adv. hæres.*, IV, xxx, 1.

<sup>8</sup> On Origen's exegesis, cf. Prat, *op. cit.*, pp. 111-167; 174-187; Westcott, art. Origen in *Dict. of Christian Biography*, Vol. IV, cols. 104-127; Bardy, art. Origène in *Dict. de Théol. cath.*, Vol. XI, cols. 1495-1501 and 1505-1509.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Harnack, *Der kirchengeschichtliche Ertrag der exegetischen Arbeiten des Origenes*.

<sup>10</sup> During the last years of his life, from the age of sixty onwards, Origen was sufficiently sure of himself to allow stenographers to take down his homilies without first writing them out himself.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. W. Voelker, *Das Vollkommenheitsideal des Origenes*, Tübingen, 1931.

to be led astray by creatures.<sup>12</sup> The aim of all its existence here below is to disengage itself from this multiplicity of things and to recollect itself in order to be united once more to God.<sup>13</sup>

### *Asceticism*

This effort calls for a rigorous asceticism, and Origen does not conceal its requirements. Life is a warfare in which are engaged the soldiers of God and the soldiers of Satan.<sup>14</sup> No neutrality is possible: "Every man endowed with reason is either a child of God or a child of the devil; for either he commits sin or he does not commit it: there is no middle course. If he sins, he is of the devil; if he does not sin, he is of God."<sup>15</sup> In this inevitable and constant warfare, prayer is necessary. It is by prayer that, although we ourselves are quite weak, we are able to vanquish myriads of enemies, visible and invisible, determined upon our destruction, and when through our own fault we sin, we are able thereby to rise up again by repentance.<sup>16</sup> The good things we ought to attain to are beyond our reach; the perfection required of us exceeds our powers; all this we must obtain through prayer.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>12</sup> This conception of the Fall, familiar to the neo-Platonists and especially to Plotinus, is found also in Clement and Origen; cf. Cadiou, *Introduction*, pp. 22 and 48-59. "The Gnostic knows that amongst the angels, some have allowed themselves to slip down even to the earth, not having as yet reduced to the only virtuous habit their natural tendency to divide themselves between two objects" (Clement, *Strom.*, VII, xlvi, 6). "All those who share in him who is—and those are the saints—may truly be said to exist; but those who have rejected the participation in him who is, by the very fact of their privation, have become those who are not" (*In Joann.*, II, xiii, 98).

<sup>13</sup> Cf. *In Joann.*, XX, xxxix, 374: "As long as a man keeps Christ's word, he does not see death, but if he wearies of his care in keeping the word, if he ceases to keep it, he no longer keeps himself, and then he sees death, not in another but in himself. . . . Just as the eyes become dim by looking at darkness, so also death, beheld by one who has not kept the word, makes him die, extinguishes his sight, and blinds him, and he will have to implore the help of him who opens the eyes of the blind." Commenting on *Matt.* xv, 19, he writes (*In Matt. Comm.*, xi, 15): "The source and origin of all sin are evil thoughts; as long as these do not control us there are no murders, adulteries, or anything of the like. We must take every care to guard our hearts, for when the Lord comes on the day of Judgment, he will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts."

<sup>14</sup> *In Ps.* xxxvi, *hom.*, ii, 8.

<sup>15</sup> *In Joann.*, XX, xiii, 107.

<sup>16</sup> *De oratione*, XIII, iii; Bardy, *op. cit.*, pp. 66-67.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, *Introd.*, pp. 17 *et seq.* Cf. *In Joann.*, X, xxviii, 173: "To see all this and to understand it, there is required that sense of the truth which is given to

To prayer we must join the practice of asceticism. We are aware of the life of poverty and mortification which Origen had imposed upon himself from his youth; he tried to lead his disciples and his hearers along the same road. In this matter especially the prophets were his masters: the life they chose is "difficult to imitate, hard, free, invincible in face of death and danger." Such were Moses, Jeremias, Isaias, "who went beyond all asceticism, living for three years naked and without shoes," and Daniel with the young men who were his companions, who would live only on water and vegetables. Compared with these examples, the strength of Antisthenes, Diogenes or Crates was but child's play.<sup>18</sup>

The apostles themselves are also our models, especially St. Paul. He brought his body into subjection; he found strength in his weakness.<sup>19</sup> Christians often ask God to grant them the lot of the prophets and the apostles: let them understand what this prayer means. "Give us to suffer what the prophets suffered, grant us to be hated as the prophets were hated, give us to preach a doctrine which shall make us hated; give us as many trials as the apostles. But to say: 'Give us the lot of the prophets' if we do not wish to suffer what the prophets suffered is an unjust pretence."<sup>20</sup>

This ascetical tendency is much more prominent than in Clement, and we already see in this doctrine an anticipation of the spiritual rigour of the Fathers of the Desert.<sup>21</sup> But in Origen as in the latter, asceticism aims only at freeing the soul and enabling it to unite itself to God. That is what a Christian seeks by

those who can say: 'We have the mind of Christ, to see the gifts which God has given us'; we know well that that exceeds our powers, for our understanding is not limpid, our eyes are not such as should be the eyes of the beautiful spouse of Christ, whose husband says: 'Thy eyes are like those of doves.' . . . Nevertheless, in this state we do not hesitate to take into our hands these words which are called the words of life, in order to try to possess the virtue which flows from them to those who handle them with faith." Cf. Cadiou, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

<sup>18</sup> *Contra Celsum*, VII, vii.

<sup>19</sup> *In Matt. Comm.*, ser. 94.

<sup>20</sup> *In Jerem. hom.*, xvi, 14. Mortification and asceticism are two of the favourite topics of Origen; many passages concerning them have been collected by Bornemann, *In investiganda monachatus origine quibus de causis ratio habenda sit Origenis*, 1885, pp. 38 *et seq.*, 78 *et seq.*

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Bornemann, *op. cit.*, and Voelker, *op. cit.*, p. 61. Origen nevertheless lived in the world, and preached to Christians living in the world; his asceticism aimed at the same end as that of the solitaries, but it had not the inflexible severity of the latter.

observing virginity,<sup>22</sup> withdrawing from the world,<sup>23</sup> sacrificing as much as possible the goods of fortune,<sup>24</sup> despising human glory,<sup>25</sup> detaching himself even from profane sciences and from philosophy, the good things of Egypt in which the true Israelite should not put his trust.<sup>26</sup> There are indeed amongst the Greeks some truths which may be utilised, but "we can never find there a wisdom which is not corrupted"; all must be purified before it is utilised;<sup>27</sup> we must keep our souls jealously faithful to Christ alone.

This jealous fidelity is especially marked in Origen. He does

<sup>22</sup> Virgins and martyrs are the firstfruits of the Church; after these, and in the second place, come those who after contracting marriage have lived in continence: *In Num. hom.*, xi, 3.

<sup>23</sup> He flees the world while living in the world: *In Levit. hom.*, xi, 1. Cf. Voelker, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

<sup>24</sup> Here again Origen is more insistent than was Clement (cf. Bk. III, p. 905). This poverty, as we have seen (*supra*, p. 953), is especially required in priests, but it ought to be practised by every Christian who aspires to perfection: *In Levit. hom.*, xv, 2.

<sup>25</sup> Jesus has taught us to avoid all human greatness: he fled when they would have made him king: *In Joann.*, XXVIII, xxiii, 209-210.

<sup>26</sup> We have pointed out this feature in Origen's letter to Gregory; we find many like passages in his homilies. Origen agrees that we may derive some profit from human sciences, and occasionally make use of them in order to convert others; thus the Patriarchs had children from strange women or from concubines (*In Gen. hom.*, xi, 2). But the one thing which is truly worthy of God is to adhere to these doctrines without ever departing from the rule of truth, and to repeat unceasingly: "There are sixty queens, eighty concubines, and young girls without number, and yet she is unique, my dove, my perfect one" (*In Num. hom.*, xx, 3). Still more characteristic is the interpretation of the story of Achimelech, whom God did not permit to touch Sara. "The name of Achimelech signifies 'the king my father.' Accordingly it seems to me that Achimelech represents here the wise of this world: these give themselves to the study of philosophy, but they do not arrive at the whole and perfect rule of piety; yet they have recognised that God is the father and king of all. As for morals, we see that they have made some effort to reach purity of heart, and that they have sought with all their heart the inspiration of divine virtue, but God has not allowed them to touch it; this grace was reserved for the Gentiles, not by Abraham who, great as he was, was only a servant, but by Christ" (*In Gen. hom.*, vi, 2). The story of Achimelech had been commented on by Philo, *De plantatione*, clxix, and by Clement, *Pædagog.*, I, v, 21, 3, but in a different sense. The passages of Origen on this subject are collected by Harnack, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 39-47, and Vol. II, pp. 89-99; he rightly stresses Origen's severity in contrast with Clement's indulgence.

<sup>27</sup> He derives this teaching from a text in *Deuteronomy* (xxi, 10-13) on the treatment of captive women: "Many times I have set forth to wage war against my enemies, and I have found in the booty a beautiful woman: by all this I desire to signify whatever our enemies have said that is good and reasonable: we must purify and detach this from pagan science. . . . Amongst our enemies we do not find a pure woman, for there is no wisdom among them that is not contaminated by some impurity." *In Levit. hom.*, vii, 6.

indeed indicate the errors in philosophical systems, and endeavours to preserve his disciples from them, but above all he is anxious lest they should be led astray by a strange master who would lead them to forget Christ, or at least might lessen the exclusive fidelity which they owe to him. His ideal is St. Paul, and he would wish to say in his turn: "Who shall separate us from the charity of Christ?" He adds: "I can say this in all confidence: neither the love of profane letters, nor the sophisms of philosophers, nor the frauds of astrologers concerning the supposed courses of the stars, nor the divination of demons, full of lies, nor any other science of the future sought by evil artifices, will be able to separate us from the charity of the God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." <sup>28</sup>

### *Union with God*

This union with God, preferred above all else, is the term to which the hope and desire of a Christian tend unceasingly. To arrive at this terminus we must travel a long road, full of trials and temptations. Origen finds this journey in the symbol of the crossing of the desert by the children of Israel.<sup>29</sup> To begin with, we must enter the desert, leaving Egypt and everything we have upon earth: those alone will have the courage to do this who desire no other lot here below but God. Moreover, it is possible only if we are upheld by Christ "who is our strength," and if we are guided by Moses and Aaron, i.e. faith and the works of worship and all the virtues. Moses himself did not know whither he was going, but "the Lord himself became his guide," for the pillar of fire and the cloud were the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The stages of this journey through the desert are figures of the mystical stages of our spiritual pilgrimage. The Hebrews celebrated the Pasch in Egypt, and the next day set out on their journey: the feasts here below are only shadows: in the desert the Pasch will be a perfect one. We go out of a world which is upset and agitated—that is the meaning of Pharaoh—and we arrive at Sochoth, "the tents," for the soul is now a stranger here below. We cross the Red Sea, and approach the "Bitter Waters": it is a hard trial to cross the sea with its storms, and to hear the noise and booming of the furious waves, but if we follow Moses, the Law of

<sup>28</sup> *In Judic. hom.*, iii, 3. Cf. *ibid.*, V, v.

<sup>29</sup> *In Num. hom.*, xxvii; cf. Voelker, *op. cit.*, pp. 62-75.

God, we shall cross the sea with dry feet. As for the "Bitter Waters," we must not be afraid of these: "If you enter upon the path of virtue, do not refuse to approach the bitter waters." A little farther on we arrive at the desert on Sin, which name signifies bush and temptation; the bush is the vision of God, but visions are not unaccompanied by temptation:

For sometimes the angel of darkness transforms himself into an angel of light; watchful attention is therefore necessary in order to discern the different visions. Thus Josue, seeing a vision and knowing that it might be a temptation, said to the one who appeared to him: "Art thou a friend or a foe?" In the same way the soul which makes progress when she begins to discern between visions, shows that she is truly spiritual if she always knows how to discern them. That is why amongst the spiritual gifts is included that of the discernment of spirits (xi).

From Sin we reach Raphaca:

Raphaca signifies health. There are many illnesses of the soul. Avarice is a malady, and a detestable one; then there are pride, anger, boasting, fear, inconstancy, pusillanimity and all the others. When, O Lord Jesus, wilt thou cure me from all my maladies? When shall I be able to say: "O my soul, bless the Lord, who cureth all thy diseases?" When shall I also be able to establish myself in Raphaca, in health?

After this come labours, for it is in order to support these that God gives us health. Then we receive the Law of God on Sinai, "when the soul has become able to receive the divine secrets and the heavenly visions." Next comes the grave of lusts, then the open spaces of perfection and beatitude.

Notice well, O pilgrim, the law of your progress: when you have buried and mortified the concupiscences of the flesh, you will arrive at the wide open spaces of beatitude. Thence you pass on to Rathma and Pharan. Rathma signifies "consummated vision"; Pharan "visible mouth." The soul has to grow that it be no longer importuned by the flesh, and that it may have consummated visions and grasp the perfect knowledge of things, that is, the causes of the Incarnation of the Word of God, that it may understand more fully and more deeply the reasons of his dispensations (xii).

Finally, after further stages, the soul arrives at its end.

When the soul has passed through all these virtues and reached the summit of perfection, it leaves this world and goes away, as was written of Enoch: "He was found no more, for God took him." Such a man seems still to live in this world and in the flesh; and yet he is no longer to be found. Where is he no longer found? In any worldly action, in any carnal thing, in any matter of vanity. For God has taken him away from all these, and has established him in the region of virtues. The final stage is in the west, in the land of Moab, opposite the Jordan. For all this journey has no other end than to lead us to the river of God, to bring us to the flowing stream of wisdom, to bathe us in the waters of divine knowledge, so that, being purified by all these trials, we may be able to enter into the promised land (xii).

When he has finished this lengthy exposition, Origen fears that he may not have been followed by all his hearers. To bring home to them all the stages which have been passed through, he compares them to the classes which a scholar goes through: he is first of all in the alphabet class, then the class of syllables, then the class of names, and finally a calculator. This treatise and many others in Origen's homilies show us that many Christians found difficulty in grasping this symbolical exegesis. This does not surprise us, but what is very striking is the high spiritual teaching beneath the exegesis. It is indeed remarkable that the priest of Cæsarea should have been able to expound this to all the faithful, and that he should have persuaded them to follow him up to these elevated regions.

This conception of spiritual progress and of its stages has been set forth above according to Homily 27 of the *Book of Numbers*, because it is here that we best see it as a whole and in its details. But it is mentioned also very often in Origen's works.<sup>30</sup> Some historians make this a matter for criticism. For St. Paul, they say, what appears in the moral life of a Christian is mainly the rupture with the past, accomplished once for all by the new birth; for Origen, on the contrary, it is a progressive development, a gradual ascent by which we successively climb the degrees of the perfect life.<sup>31</sup> This antithesis is a forced one,<sup>32</sup> and in the measure in which

<sup>30</sup> Many other examples will be found in our article, *Les degrés de la connaissance religieuse d'après Origène*, in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XII, 1922, pp. 265-296.

<sup>31</sup> Thus Voelker, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

<sup>32</sup> St. Paul himself also indicates the various stages of the Christian life, for instance in *I Cor.* iii, 1-2, *Gal.* iv, 19, and on the other hand Origen presents as the first stage of the spiritual life the rupture with sin. Cf. above, p. 955.

it is exact, it is to be explained not so much by a divergence in doctrine as by a diversity in the disciples. The readers of the epistles of St. Paul were just emerging from paganism; they still retained a painful memory of the darkness in which they had so long lived, and the joy of the wonderful light which had suddenly shone upon them. Origen's hearers, on the other hand, had for the most part been Christians for a long time. They were already children of light, and they were bound to live as such, having no more darkness, but being wholly transparent and shining forth with the light of Christ.

There is another contrast, which is deeper and more instructive. If we compare the doctrine of Origen with the speculative teaching of the Gnostics, we are the better able to realise their character by the contrast between them. One of the fundamental dogmas of Gnosticism is the essential distinction between the different races of men, the hylicals, the psychicals, and the pneumatics:<sup>33</sup> by natural necessity a man belongs to one of these classes, and it would be in vain to endeavour to change it. In Origen, the degrees of religious knowledge are certainly far removed from each other, but there is no abyss separating them; the whole effort of the preacher is aimed at leading Christians on to the highest union with God, for all God's children can and should aspire to this.<sup>34</sup>

### *The Christian Mysteries*

While this radical opposition between the two religious conceptions is beyond question, we must allow that some features in Origen's teaching are not borrowed from the Catholic tradition, and theology will not adopt them. Clement had believed in an esoteric tradition coming from the apostles and transmitted to subsequent generations through a chain of specially favoured people.<sup>35</sup> Origen is more reserved than his master: he definitely sets aside the claim of the Gnostics to a secret tradition.<sup>36</sup> At the same time

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Bk. III, pp. 635, 637.

<sup>34</sup> This opposition comes out very clearly in the *Commentary on St. John*, in the texts of Heracleon and Origen's criticism of these. Cf. A. E. Brooke, *The Fragments of Heracleon*, in *Texts and Studies*, Vol. I, 4, 1891.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Bk. III, p. 918.

<sup>36</sup> He comments thus on *I Cor.* iv, 6-8: "Let us see what is signified by 'in nobis discatis, ne supra quam scriptum est': if someone imperfect in virtue should wish, before accomplishing what is written, to ascend as far as that which is not written, he will not even comprehend what is written. For just as



he thinks that the mysteries, and especially those which the sacred Scripture signifies by symbols, are revealed by God to chosen souls in visions, and can be communicated by these souls to others worthy to receive them.

It is certain that these mysteries were known and wholly grasped by him who was caught up to the third heaven and who, being in heaven, saw the heavenly things, the true Jerusalem, the City of God, and also Mount Sion, wherever this may be, and Hebron, and also all those towns which Scripture describes as being distributed by lot. He must not only have seen all these, but also he must have grasped in his mind the reasons of all, since he himself confesses that he heard words and traditions. But what words? "Unspeakable words," he says, "such as it is not lawful for a man to utter." You see from this that Paul grasped all things in his mind, but he was not permitted to tell all to men. To what men? Without doubt those to whom he says reproachfully: "Are you not men? Do you not walk according to man?" But he may have said all those things to those who no longer walked according to man: he told them to Timothy, to Luke and to the other disciples whom he knew to be capable of receiving ineffable secrets. And he makes a mysterious allusion to this in the recommendation he gives to Timothy: "Remember the words which thou hast heard of me, and entrust them to faithful men, who shall be capable of teaching them to others." Thus let us, who believe that these are divine and mysterious things, make ourselves by our actions and our merits worthy of these secrets, and able to understand them, so that when we shall have worthily understood them, we may be able to attain to them in the heavenly inheritance.<sup>37</sup>

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one cannot climb a ladder other than by ascending regularly according to one's powers, starting from the lowest steps, so also is it in the divine sciences. This has not been understood by certain heretics who appeal to Traditions and say: 'These are above that which is written; for our Saviour transmitted them secretly to his apostles, and the apostles to such or such,' and so by this mythology deceive the hearts of the simple." This fragment of Origen, published by Claude Jenkins (*Journal of Theological Studies*, Vol. IX, 1908, p. 357), has been cited by D. van den Eynde (*op. cit.*, pp. 232-233). With it we must compare *In Joann.*, XIII, vi-vii, 27-39: Scripture is but an introduction to the mysteries of God; beyond there are many things which the Scripture does not contain, and even many things which the voice or the tongue of man cannot express; very few know these, but John heard them like thunder, without being able to repeat them; Paul heard them, but as unutterable words.

<sup>37</sup> *In Josue hom.*, xxiii, 4; cf. *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XII, pp. 287-288. Cf. *De principiis*, II, xi, 5-7: concerning what we shall learn in heaven; Brady, *op. cit.*, pp. 255-258.

This text brings out a new aspect of Origenism, the Gnostic and neo-Platonist influences it displays. We find them first in the idea of a "mysterious" teaching transmitted by the apostles to a few disciples worthy to be chosen for this purpose, to Luke for instance, or Timothy; these in turn entrust these secrets to a few faithful men. Origen stops there, and does not seek to claim apostolic authority for his own speculations as derived from a mysterious tradition through this secret channel.<sup>38</sup> He thus avoids the most pernicious error; but if he does not himself appeal to this secret tradition, he admits its existence, at least in the time of the apostles and the generation which succeeded them.

### *The Symbolism of Scripture*

This error follows from a too materialistic conception of the symbolism in the Scriptures: there are in heaven spiritual realities, of which things here below are the symbols; there is a heavenly Jerusalem, and Mount Sion, "wherever it may be," and Hebron, and all those Biblical cities whose history would be unimportant if it were not a mirror of heavenly mysteries for ourselves.<sup>39</sup> To understand this, we must recall that for Origen God alone is completely immaterial; the spiritual world, the prototype of our own, is accordingly regarded as having also its own cities and its wars, which carnal man cannot perceive, but the intuition of which may be granted to us by God. In this way the exegesis of Origen is linked up with neo-Platonist exegesis and influenced by it.<sup>40</sup> It supposes that these secrets can be transmitted by those who have received them to men worthy of such trust. That is clearly a dangerous mistake, for it misrepresents the truly transcendental and superhuman character of the divine revelations,<sup>41</sup> and for the communication of

<sup>38</sup> Cf. D. van den Eynde, *op. cit.*, p. 232.

<sup>39</sup> Amongst Origen's audience, many became impatient to see him dwell on the history of the wars of Josue against Hai or other towns equally insignificant; to retain their interest he had to explain to them that these towns and these wars are symbols of spiritual realities: *In Josue hom.*, viii, 2; *hom.*, xv, 1.

<sup>40</sup> Thus, for Maximus of Tyre, Achilles is still living in a mysterious island off Pontus (*Conference*, XV, vii); similarly Athena, appearing to Aelius Aristides, assures him that the *Odyssey* is not a fable, but an actual reality: Ulysses is alive, and so is Telemachus (*Sacred Discourse*, II).

<sup>41</sup> We notice that the text of St. Paul is given a wrong interpretation: "Unutterable words which it is not lawful for a man to speak" becomes ". . . which it is not lawful to say to a man"; they may be spoken to those who, by their

these secrets we are introduced to a privileged caste which Christianity does not recognise.

### *The True Adorers*

Origen allows himself sometimes to be led on to this conception of a special form of Christianity, superior to that of the simple faithful not only by sanctity of life but also by the privilege of reserved revelations; these latter convey an intuition of divine mysteries which the mass of Christians do not know; living amongst carnal men, these spiritual people should sometimes condescend to their level:

It may happen that the true adorer, he who adores in spirit and in truth, may make use of symbolical actions in order to free gently those who are in bondage to symbols, and to enable them to pass from symbols to the truth. That is how Paul seems to have acted towards Timothy, and perhaps also at Cenchrea and Jerusalem, as is written in the *Acts of the Apostles*.<sup>42</sup>

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virtue, are no longer men, to Timothy or to Luke. In the *Commentary on St. John*, XIII, v. 28, Origen writes: "It was allowed to speak these words to the angels, but not to men; but here we have not only a prohibition but an impossibility: these mysteries are such that neither the voice nor the tongue of men can enunciate them, at least by the normal forms of expression" (*Ibid.*, 27).

<sup>42</sup> In *Joann.*, XIII, xviii, 109-111. The same idea is developed at greater length in the first book of the same *Commentary* (I, vii, 39-43): "Just as the Law contained the shadow of the good things to come, which were to be manifested by the Law preached in truth, so the Gospel, which the common people think they understand, teaches the shadow of the mysteries of Christ. But the eternal Gospel, of which John speaks, and which may properly be called the Spiritual Gospel, presents clearly to those who understand, all that concerns the Son of God, and the mysteries revealed in his discourses, and the realities of which his actions were the symbols. . . . Peter and Paul, who at first were manifestly Jews and circumcised, subsequently received from Jesus the grace to be such in secret; they were Jews ostensibly for the salvation of the majority, and they confessed this not only by their words but also they manifested it by their actions. The same must be said of their Christianity. And just as Paul could not succour the Jews according to the flesh without circumcising Timothy when reason required this, and also shaved his head and made offerings when there was good reason for doing so, thus becoming a Jew in order to save the Jews, so also he who devotes himself to the salvation of the many cannot hope to give efficacious succour by the hidden or secret Christianity to those who are still bound up with the elements of obvious or ordinary Christianity, or make them better, or enable them to reach that which is more perfect and higher. Hence Christianity must be both spiritual and corporeal; and when we should set forth the corporeal Gospel and say that we know nothing amongst the carnal save Jesus Christ and him crucified, we must do so. But when we find people perfected by the Spirit

We see in these passages one of the dangers of such ambitions: these perfect ones, these "true adorers" regard themselves as isolated in the midst of the simple, the "Jews" or carnal ones. Adopting for themselves, not without conceit, the tactics of St. Paul, they "become Jews to the Jews, in order to gain the Jews," they "make use of symbolical actions to set free those who are in bondage to symbols." The aim is a noble one, but the method envisaged is dangerous: we get the impression on the one hand of a disdain which is rather pharisaical, and on the other of a condescension which may not be altogether sincere.<sup>43</sup>

### *The Faith of the Simple*

If, in this religious system, the position of the chosen few is a dangerous one, what is to be said of that of simple believers? In his controversy with Celsus, Origen has to answer the latter's attacks upon Christianity. In the course of his work, he defends the faith of the simple as not absolutely the best, but the best possible, in view of the weakness of those to whom it has to be proposed; possibly some chosen minds will not be satisfied with it, but these will be able to pass beyond it and ascend higher, without having thereby to abandon Christianity.<sup>44</sup>

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and bearing the fruits thereof, and in love with heavenly wisdom, we ought to communicate to them the discourse which rises from the Incarnation to that which was with God."

<sup>43</sup> It is hardly necessary to remark that the example of St. Paul does not justify such an attitude. In certain circumstances he carried out rites which had been superseded, but he more than once pointed out quite plainly that circumcision is nothing, and that Jesus Christ has delivered us from the slavery of the Law. His teaching and his own life are opposed to Origen's conception that he was outwardly a Jew and a Christian in secret.

<sup>44</sup> Answering the attacks of Celsus against the promises and threats set forth by the Christian religion, Origen writes: "If anyone should attempt to see in all this, not so much wickedness as superstition in the mass of those who believe in our doctrine, and criticise it as making people superstitious, we would give him the reply given by a legislator to one who asked if he had given his citizens the best laws. The answer was: 'Not absolutely the best, but the best possible.' So the Father of Christian doctrines might say: 'I have laid down the best possible laws and doctrines with a view to the amendment of the morals of the majority, threatening them with punishments which are not imaginary but penalties inflicted upon sinners, true and necessary punishments, which aim at correcting the wicked even though they may not wholly understand the will of the one who punishes them, or the way the penalties act.' All this has its utility and is according to truth, and is usefully set forth in obscure language. For the rest, it is not generally to the wicked that the Christian preaching is addressed; we are not

The teaching set forth to the simple is true; the punishments with which we threaten sinners "are not falsehoods"; they are "real punishments," and hence this elementary teaching differs from the myths which are set forth to the uninitiated in pagan religions;<sup>45</sup> but these truths, "which seem clear to the mass of people, may not be clear to the minds of the chosen few."<sup>46</sup>

### *The Influence of Hellenism*

The characteristics of Origen's thought which we have just indicated show that he was certainly a man of his time, and also illustrate the religious ideas current around him, either through his sympathy or his opposition towards them.<sup>47</sup>

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impudent towards the divinity, for we say concerning him things which are true and which seem clear to the crowd, although they may not be clear to those few minds which give themselves to philosophising on our doctrines" (*Contra Celsum*, III, lxxix). Cf. *ibid.*, I, ix; xii-xiii.

<sup>45</sup> This comparison between pagan and Christian initiation is given by Origen, *Contra Celsum*, I, xii, text quoted below, p. 1077.

<sup>46</sup> In the *Homilies on Jeremias*, Origen tries to explain how God can utter through the prophets threats which will not be accomplished, and he thus interprets *Jeremias* xx, 7, "Thou hast deceived me, O Lord, and I am deceived": "How can the prophet speak thus? Does God deceive? I do not know how to speak sufficiently prudently, for if, by the grace of God and his Word, I see something here, I need great prudence in expressing it. It was after he had been deceived that the prophet said: 'Thou hast deceived me, O Lord, and I am deceived'; it seems that the elements, the preparation, were for him a deception, and that he would not have been able to receive this elementary teaching or be prepared for piety if he had not at first been deceived, until he should at last become aware of this deception." Origen points out that in educating children, we deceive them by bogies which are necessary at first, though the children realise their unreality later on. He continues: "In respect of God, we are all children, and we have to be brought up as children; that is why God, in his mercy, deceives us, although at first we are not aware that we are being deceived; he does not wish us to be instructed by bogies when we are no longer children, but by realities. We treat differently a child, whom we frighten, and a person who is older and has ceased to be an infant" (*In Jerem. hom.*, xix, 15). After a lengthy development, Origen concludes his homily thus: "Like a child, fear the threats, in order not to suffer that which is worse than the threats, i.e. eternal punishment, the fire which cannot be extinguished, and perhaps a punishment even more terrible, which is prepared for those who have spent a long life in violating right reason." This final exhortation sufficiently indicates what are the "bogies" of which Origen speaks; they are, not eternal punishments, but punishments here below. On this question of the faith of the simple, and the truth which Origen attributes to it, cf. *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XII, pp. 266 et seq.

<sup>47</sup> On the relations between Origen and Plotinus, we have Porphyry's statement in his *Life of Plotinus*, iii and xiv: "Herennius, Origen and Plotinus had agreed

We have already mentioned Porphyry's statement concerning Origen: <sup>48</sup> "In his conduct he lived as a Christian, but in his belief concerning the divinity he was a Greek, and transported the art of the Greeks to foreign fables." This judgment by a bitter opponent should be received only with reserve; our own study of the religious teaching of Origen enables us to apply the necessary modifications.

It is beyond question that Origen desired above all to be a Christian and to form other Christians; it is equally certain that he set out to give to Christianity an interpretation more profound than that which was current amongst the mass of the faithful. In this effort he utilised, when he thought it possible, the religious conceptions and especially the theological methods which he found in the Hellenism of his time.

Thus, when he describes the sphere of action of the three divine Persons, <sup>49</sup> he seems to be influenced by the principle familiar to the neo-Platonists: the action of the supreme causes is more generic, and underlies the more particular activity of secondary causes. <sup>50</sup> It is also from Hellenism that he derives his belief

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together to keep secret the doctrines of Ammonius, which their master had thoroughly explained to them in his lectures. Plotinus kept his promise; he conversed with some who went to him, but he concealed from all the doctrines he had received from Ammonius. Herennius was the first to break the agreement, and Origen followed him. He wrote only the *Treatise on Demons*, and in the reign of Gallienus his treatise *That the King alone is a Poet*." Bréhier (*op. cit.*, p. 4, n. 1) attributes these two lost treatises to Origen, and that is certainly the natural sense of the text, but if the second was composed in the reign of Gallienus it could not have been Origen's work, for he died at the age of 69 in 254 or 255, i.e. before the reign of Gallienus (260). Cf. xiv: "One day, Origen came to Plotinus's class; he (the latter) blushed and wished to stand up. Asked by Origen to speak, he replied that one no longer desired to do so when one was certain to be addressing people who knew what one was going to say; he continued the discussion for a little while and then arose." Now Plotinus was born in 203; he went to Rome in the reign of Philip at the age of 40 after Gordian's death, passing through Antioch on the way. The meeting in question may have taken place at Antioch; we do not know of a visit of Origen to Rome after 243. The *Life of Plotinus* was written by Porphyry in 298, 28 years after the death of Plotinus. Porphyry was then at least 68 years old; he had lived five years with Plotinus, from 263. Origen was then dead; Porphyry therefore could not have witnessed the meeting he mentions. It is widely thought that the Origen mentioned here was a pagan philosopher and not the master of the Catechetical School. But this distinction itself gives rise to many difficulties.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 933.

<sup>49</sup> *De principiis*. I, iii, 3; cf. *supra*, p. 940, n. 39.

<sup>50</sup> Proclus, *Element. Theol.*, 71-72, ed. Dodds, Oxford, 1933, p. 68; cf. n., p. 238.

in the pre-existence of souls,<sup>51</sup> the conception of the heavenly beings as spherical bodies,<sup>52</sup> and of the souls of the dead as luminous bodies.<sup>53</sup> As for magic, Origen certainly opposed it throughout, but he regarded it as a serious science, known only by a small number of men.<sup>54</sup>

### *The Allegorical Method*

All these things bear witness to the contact between Origen's thought and the Hellenism of his time. But more important than these coincidences, which affect only secondary points in religious doctrine, there remains Origen's adoption of certain mental attitudes and forms of speculation, which came from neo-Platonism and left their impress on his theological system. We must mention especially here the relation he establishes between the sensible and the intelligible worlds, the former being the symbol and the latter the reality signified by the symbol. Origen's exegesis is dominated by this conception, as had been that of Philo:

If there are secret relations between the visible and the invisible, earth and heaven, the flesh and the soul, the body and the spirit, and if the world arises from the union of these, there exists also in Scripture a visible element and an invisible one. It has a body—the letter which is seen by everyone; a soul—the hidden meaning which it encloses: and a spirit—the heavenly things it figures and represents.<sup>55</sup>

This distinction between the literal and the spiritual sense is traditional in the Church, and Origen rightly emphasises in his

<sup>51</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 938.

<sup>52</sup> *De oratione*, xxxi, 3. On this theory of spherical bodies in Hellenism, cf. the note in the edition of Koetschau, p. 397; on its place in Origenism, cf. Huet, *Origeniana*, II, ii, 9.

<sup>53</sup> *Contra Celsum*, II, lx. Cf. Hippolytus, *Philos.*, I, xix, 10. On the astral bodies of souls, cf. *De principiis*, II, ii.

<sup>54</sup> *Contra Celsum*, I, xxiv. He allows that by his magic Apollonius of Tyana deceived many wise men, showing that such enchantments have their effect not only on the simple but also on philosophers: cf. *ibid.*, II, xli. On this whole question, cf. Bardy, *Origène et la Magie*, in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XVIII, 1928, pp. 126-142.

<sup>55</sup> *In Levit. hom.*, v, 1. The Greek text of this passage has been preserved in *Philocalia*, ch. xxx. Origen distinguishes three principles in man: the body, the soul and the spirit, and consequently there are three senses in Scripture: cf. *De princ.*, III, iv, 1; *ibid.*, IV, iv, 11; *In Levit. hom.*, v, 5. Underlying this theory we find the comparison between Scripture and a living being. Similarly Philo (*De vita contemplativa*, lxxviii), who distinguishes only between soul and body, finds two senses in Scripture, one being the soul and the other the body.

treatise *De principiis* the strength of this tradition.<sup>56</sup> But what is peculiar to himself is the interpretation he gives to these two senses<sup>57</sup> and of the relation between them: they are related as the sensible to the intelligible, as the visible to the invisible, and as the body to the spirit. This relation is based on a natural connection (συγγένεια) which unites together these two worlds. The Old Testament is the figure of the New, but also a symbol of the eternal realities. This applies to Jerusalem, Mount Sion, Hebron and the other Biblical cities,<sup>58</sup> and also to the whole history of Christ:

That which has been written concerning the events in the history of Jesus must not be thought to have no other truth than that of the letter and the historic fact, for those who study the Scriptures with more understanding show that each of these facts is itself a symbol.<sup>59</sup>

Briefly, just as the Law was but a preparation for the Gospel, so also the latter is itself the symbol of the eternal Gospel.<sup>60</sup> But these symbols are intelligible only to Spiritual Christians; <sup>61</sup> ordinary folk think they understand the Gospel, but they do not grasp its ultimate significance.

This interpretation of the spiritual sense was not the only one

<sup>56</sup> "Another point of ecclesiastical teaching is that the Holy Spirit, the author of the Scriptures, gives to them, besides the sense which is on the surface, another one which escapes the majority of men. The sacred narratives are types and figures of divine mysteries. The whole Church agrees in saying that the Law is spiritual, but the spiritual sense of the Law is known only by those to whom the Holy Spirit has deigned to grant wisdom and knowledge" (*De princ.*, I, *pref.*, 8).

<sup>57</sup> The three senses are more usually reduced to two in Origen.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 962.

<sup>59</sup> *Contra Celsum*, II, lxix.

<sup>60</sup> *In Joann.*, I, vii, 39, quoted above, p. 964, n. 42.

<sup>61</sup> The spiritual man possesses a "divine sensibility," or spiritual senses of vision, hearing, etc., which enable him to perceive suprasensible realities: *Contra Celsum*, I, xlviii; cf. Gregory, in his *Discourse*, 177: "That which God set forth through others by means of enigmas, he made to be understood by Origen"; 178: "If he teaches all this, it is, I think, by the communication of the divine Spirit, for those who prophesy and those who understand the prophets have need of the same power, and no one can understand a prophet unless the same Spirit who has prophesied gives him the understanding of the discourse." This theory of the inspiration of the exegete is an exaggeration of Gregory's. Origen himself is more reserved; cf. Zoellig, *op. cit.*, p. 95, quoting *Epist. ad Greg.*, iii; *In Mt.*, xv, 27. Yet it is easy to understand the exaggeration: these spiritual realities, of which sensible realities are the symbols, are not taught by the official tradition, nor by a secret tradition; they are grasped only by an intuition which is a gift of God.



set forth by Origen.<sup>62</sup> His fight against the literalism of the Marcionites, even more than against that of the Jews,<sup>63</sup> made him more impatient against the slavery of the letter. His impatience was justified, and his opposition was to a certain extent beneficial.<sup>64</sup> But at the same time it must be allowed that by its exaggeration it provoked the literalist reaction of the School of Antioch.<sup>65</sup>

For these exaggerations, Hellenism was in great part responsible, and Porphyry was not far wrong when he wrote: "It was from Cheremon and Cornutus that Origen learnt the allegorical method of the Greek mysteries, which he proceeded to apply to the Jewish Scriptures."<sup>66</sup>

### *The Divine Hierarchy*

To Hellenic influences must also be attributed the metaphysical scheme of the hierarchy of spiritual beings and even of the divine Persons, which so deeply disfigures Origen's theology.<sup>67</sup>

The three Persons of the Blessed Trinity are regarded by him

<sup>62</sup> If we proceed from the general principle to its applications, we find that the mysteries which Origen perceives behind the letter of the Scriptures are not philosophical speculations but the religious truths which God has revealed to Christians.

<sup>63</sup> On Origen's criticism of Jewish exegesis, cf. Harnack, *Der kirchengeschichtliche Ertrag*, Vol. I, pp. 22-30; on the Marcionites, *ibid.*, pp. 30-39; cf. Vol. II, pp. 10-34. Notice in particular a passage of Apelles, quoted by Origen, *In Gen. hom.*, ii, 2, concerning the construction of Noe's Ark: the Ark could not hold two pairs of animals of impure species and seven of pure species; even four elephants could not have found room in the Ark. "Apelles concludes: 'Accordingly, that is only a lying myth, and not divine Scripture.'" Origen replies first that, according to Hebrew tradition, all the figures given for the dimensions of the Ark must be raised to their cubes, and then he proceeds to the spiritual sense: Noe is Christ, and the Ark is the Church.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. St. Augustine, *Conf.*, VI, iv, 6: "I loved to hear Ambrose say, as he often did in his discourses to the people, 'The letter killeth, the spirit giveth life'; and in all the passages in which the teaching according to the letter seemed pernicious, he lifted the mystic veil, and opened the spiritual sense." We sometimes find even in St. Jerome this too low view of the historical sense, for which Origen is justly criticised: *Epist. ad Nepot.*, lii, 2.

<sup>65</sup> This reaction in turn had its own exaggerations. In St. John Chrysostom it produced excellent results, but we cannot forget Theodore of Mopsuestia and the Nestorians. Newman maintained, possibly with some exaggeration, that the allegorism of Alexandria was the Catholic tradition, while the Antiochene literalism was the source of heresies (*Development of Christian Doctrine*, London, 1894, pp. 285 and 343).

<sup>66</sup> Text quoted above, p. 933. On Hellenic allegorism, cf. above, p. 968.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. above, p. 940.

as a hierarchy of beings, with the Father at the head, and the Son and Holy Spirit functioning as intermediaries between him and creatures. This conception is primarily religious, inspired by the idea of the progressive ascent of the soul. It receives a further emphasis when combined with the idea of transcendence. This latter idea took in Origen a mathematical form similar to that which it had in Plotinus.<sup>68</sup> It is not to be attributed to the influence of Ammonius Saccas,<sup>69</sup> but partly to that of Philo, and above all to the prevalence of ideas which at that time had a very wide appeal.

#### § 4. THE APOLOGIST

##### *The Contra Celsum*

"Origen lived as a Christian, but thought as a Greek." That statement by Porphyry may seem to be justified in part by the preceding remarks, yet the religious and literary activities of Origen refute it. He certainly was profoundly influenced by Hellenism, and yet he was absolutely intransigent so far as the religious speculations of the Greeks were concerned. These two characteristics, irreconcilable in appearance and yet deeply rooted in Origen's work, are particularly clear in his apologetics, as set forth in his eight books *Against Celsus*. Written in the last years of his life, in 248, these throw a flood of light upon his whole career.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>68</sup> "The Father is absolute unity; the Son is multiple, at least virtually. God, then, is in every way a being which is one and simple; but Our Saviour, because of the multiplicity of beings, because God has made him the propitiation and principle of the whole creation, becomes multiple, and even perhaps becomes all these things, inasmuch as the whole creation capable of deliverance aspires towards him. It is for this he becomes the light of men, when men, darkened by evil, have need of the light which shineth in the darkness and the darkness has not suffocated them; he would not have been the light of men if men had not been in darkness" (*In Joann.*, I, xx, 119). Huet (Migne, P.G., Vol. XIV, 57) in a note defends Origen here against Petavius; it is certain that the redemption and even the creation involve in the Son relations which are due to his free will: *In Joann.*, fr., I, p. 485, 5; and I, xix, 118. But even before the creation, or independently of it, Origen finds in the word a plurality which he does not recognise in the Father. Cf. Redepenning, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 297; Denis, *op. cit.*, p. 102, and texts quoted above, p. 940. We find a similar conception in Clement, *Stromata*, IV, xxv, 156, and already in Philo, *De somniis*, I, lxii: "The logos is the place of the ideas."

<sup>69</sup> As is done by Zeller (*Philos. der Griechen*, Vol. V, p. 459, n. 3).

<sup>1</sup> On the polemics between Celsus and Origen, cf.: G. Bardy, *Le Contra Celsum d'Origène*, in *Revue pratique d'Apologétique*, Vol. XXVIII, 1919, pp. 751-761; Vol. XXIX, pp. 39-54 and 92-98; Anna Miura-Stange, *Celsus und Origenes*, Giessen, 1926; P. de Labriolle, *La Réaction païenne*, pp. 111-169.

The *True Discourse* of Celsus had been written seventy years previously. Origen had not read it, and it had made little impression on the Christians of Egypt and Palestine. It would probably have remained in oblivion if Ambrose had not read it by chance, and realised that it was a dangerous work which might disturb many souls by its attacks. He sent the work to Origen, begging him earnestly to refute it. The aged master could not refuse his friend anything; he took up the task, though at first unwillingly: was not silence like that which Jesus kept in face of his calumniators the only reply which such a libel deserved? Moreover, the works of Christ and the life lived by his disciples are a sufficient defence:

Accordingly, I affirm that the apologia which you ask me to write can only weaken this apologia in action, this power of Jesus evident to every man who is not insensible. Nevertheless, in order not to seem to refuse your request, I have tried my best to reply to each of Celsus's attacks, although in my opinion no believer could be shaken by his statements.<sup>2</sup>

The discussion then begins. Origen sets forth all the arguments of Celsus, usually in the very words in which they were pronounced, and then he refutes them.<sup>3</sup> This method made it necessary for the apologist to follow the meandering scheme of his opponent and his slow steps, but at any rate it had the great advantage of setting forth the attack itself in all sincerity as well as the defence.<sup>4</sup>

### *Celsus's Attack*

We cannot follow out this controversy in all its details. But it is interesting to notice the pagan and Christian theses as they then confronted each other in the works of these vigorous writers.

<sup>2</sup> *Contra Celsum*, pref., 3.

<sup>3</sup> He had first conceived a more ambitious plan: the detailed discussion was to have been followed by a comprehensive demonstration. But for lack of time he abandoned this (cf. *ibid.*, 6).

<sup>4</sup> The exposition of Celsus's arguments by Origen is sufficiently faithful to enable one to reconstruct, fragment by fragment, the *True Discourse* of the former. Cf. *Scriptores Græci qui Christianam impugnaverunt religionem*, I. Κελσον ἀληθῆς λόγος. The editor, K. J. Neumann, writes: "The piecing together of the fragments and the reconstitution of Celsus's work show that hardly a tenth part of it has been lost; and that what we still possess is for the most part in its original text" (*Real-Encycl. für protest. Theol.*, Vol. III, p. 773).

Celsus was regarded by Origen as an Epicurean. Some critics think he was rather a Platonist; it would seem to be more correct to regard him as an eclectic with an acute mind, well acquainted with the literature and philosophy of his time, but not adhering to any particular school. In addition, he was a statesman rather than a man of letters, a zealous official of the Roman Empire and jealous of the observance of traditions and laws.

If we compare him with his predecessors, he is greatly superior to them. The opponents whom Minucius Felix and Tertullian had to face still believed that Christians practised infanticide and incest. Celsus is not so credulous: when attacking his adversaries he despises these vague rumours, and seeks for more precise accusations with greater support. He claims to have read not only the books of the two Testaments, but also the writings of Christians; he has even studied the Gnostic sects, and very unfairly makes use of the information thus received to impute to the Church as a whole the follies and vices of these sectaries. He makes a great parade of his information, and he affirms in a boastful manner that he knows all about Christianity: πάντα γὰρ οἶδα (I, xii). Origen rightly rebukes his bragging:

If he had read the prophets, whose books are admitted to be enigmatical and obscure; if he had gone through the evangelical parables, the law, the history of the Jews and the writings of the Apostles and, having read them without prejudice, had tried to penetrate their meaning, he would not say with such assurance: "I know all." We ourselves, who have studied all these things closely, would not dare to say "I know all," for we love the truth.

Starting out with such assurance, Celsus first criticises the Old Testament, and repeats the current accusations against the Jews: they are a vagabond people expelled from Egypt and deceived by Moses (III, v; IV, xxxi). Moses himself was a plagiarist who took from the Egyptians what there is of good in him (I, xxi). The sacred books, and especially *Genesis*, are a tissue of gross legends, unworthy to be regarded as divine or to be used in the religious formation of a people. True, Jews and Christians explain away the reprehensible parts of these old stories by means of allegory, but that is only an artifice which proves their embarrassment (IV, xlix).

Jesus is the main object of his sarcasm and his attacks. Gathering

together the vilest of the Jewish calumnies, Celsus represents Jesus as being born of an adulterous union between Mary and a soldier named Panther (I, xxxii). Expelled with his mother, Jesus had to go to Egypt to gain a livelihood; there he learnt the magical arts which he later on utilised in order to deceive people. His aspect was common, his wisdom wholly borrowed from Plato, and his courage greatly inferior to that of Heracles or Epictetus.

How can we regard as a god this man who performed nothing he had promised? When we convicted and judged him and condemned him to punishment, he hid himself, took flight, and was then captured in a shameful manner: he was delivered up by those he called his disciples. If he was God, he ought not to have fled, nor to have been dragged along by ropes, and still less abandoned and given up by those who lived with him, called him their master, and regarded him as their Saviour, the Son of the most high God, and an angel. . . . If things came to pass as he willed, if he was struck down in obeying his Father, obviously nothing could have been hard or painful to him, since he was God and willed all these things. Why then does he lament, why does he groan, why does he seek to avoid the death he fears, saying "O Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me"?<sup>5</sup>

The Resurrection was a fable, originating in the imagination of a woman and a few fanatics:

Do you hold that the legends [of Orpheus and Heracles] are myths, and that the catastrophe of your own drama is an intelligible and likely one, with the cry on the Cross at the expiry, and the earthquake and the darkness? And that he who when alive had not been able to defend himself, rose again after his death, and displayed the wounds of his torture, and his pierced hands? Who was it who believed all that? A fanatical woman, according to you, and perhaps some magician of the same band, who either dreamt it or was hallucinated by his desires, as happens to so many others, or rather he wished to astonish others by this prodigy, and provide a basis for new deceptions by this lie.<sup>6</sup>

Christians are treated with the same brutal disdain: they are charlatans; like diviners and magicians, they are incapable of asking or giving a reason for their belief; they are always repeating: "Do not seek out, but believe," "Thy faith will save thee"; or again, "Wisdom is an evil; foolishness is a good thing."<sup>7</sup> They

<sup>5</sup> *Contra Celsum*, II, ix and xxiii-xxiv.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, II, Iv.

<sup>7</sup> *Contra Celsum*, I, ix.

avoid intelligent men, and seek out the ignorant, slaves, and children:

We see them going into private houses, those of spinners of wool, shoemakers, fullers, and in general those of the most ignorant and gross. In presence of the aged and prudent owners of houses they say not a word. But when they find some child or woman as ignorant as themselves, they tell them wonderful things: that one should not listen to father or master, but believe themselves; that their fathers are stupid fools, incapable of understanding or doing splendid things but absorbed by trifles; they alone know how one ought to live; if the children listen to them, it will be very fortunate for them and their house. And if while they are thus talking they perceive the tutor or the father himself coming, the more timid ones withdraw; the bolder urge the children to cast off the yoke, murmuring that they neither wish nor are able to say anything good in presence of the father or masters, corrupt persons whose brutality they fear; let the children leave their fathers and the teachers, and come with the women and their playmates to the gynæceum, or the workshop of the shoemaker or the fuller, and there learn the last word about perfection. And people believe them.<sup>8</sup>

In other mysteries, it is proclaimed: "Only those may approach who have pure hands and a right speech," or again, "Only those may draw near who are without stain, whose soul is not conscious of any fault, whose life has been good and upright." That is what is proclaimed by those who promise purification from faults. But whom do Christians call? Anyone who is a sinner, whosoever is without intelligence, or is weak in mind; in other words, whosoever is unfortunate will be received into the Kingdom of God. When you say: "Whosoever is a sinner," what do you mean thereby, if not the unjust man, the robber, the burglar, the poisoner, the violator of temples and tombs? . . . Truly we have here the proclamation of a robber-chief recruiting his gang.<sup>9</sup>

At the close of these vehement attacks in which Celsus cruelly wounds Christians on subjects on which they would feel deeply, we find his assurance failing, and his voice growing more gentle. From those whom he has thus despised and hated, he now demands support:

Uphold the emperor with all your might; collaborate with him for the defence of the right; fight for him, combat for him if circumstances call for it; assist him in the command of his armies; apply yourselves to

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, III, lv.

<sup>9</sup> *Contra Celsum*, III, lix-lxi.

the governing of the State if this is necessary in order to defend the laws and piety.<sup>10</sup>

Thus Celsus's polemics, so supercilious and peremptory, end in timid conclusions: the implacable opponent of the Christians finally summons them to the support of the State. Origen, on the other hand, restrained and prudent in controversy, defends his religion with thorough-going intransigence. Celsus finds his support in his human culture, in the philosophers and poets whose sentiments he echoes, and whose authority in his view ought to crush his ignorant opponents. But his religion is inconsistent, and is maintained only by compromises; he realises this, and gives proof of it more than once. Origen on the other hand finds in Christianity as yet only an imperfect exegetical science and a philosophy which is being elaborated, but at the same time he recognises in it with full assurance the certitude and fecundity of divine truth.<sup>11</sup>

### *Origen's Reply*

Of all the objections by Celsus, none affected Origen more than the criticism of the faith of the simple. Origen answered by asserting firmly that this simple faith constitutes a kind of knowledge assured by the word of God and shown to be fruitful by the Christian life:

Let the question be put to the multitude of believers purified by the faith from the mire of the vices in which they were previously floundering, which of the two systems is to be preferred: the correction of morals by believing without question in the reward which awaits virtue and the punishment which threatens the guilty, or else the rejection of simple faith, and the postponement of the reform of morals until the conclusion of the rational discussion. It is obvious that with very few exceptions, these people would all fail to reach even that degree of rectitude of conduct assured by simple faith, but would persevere instead in a very evil life. This is by no means to be despised as a proof

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, VIII, lxxiii-lxxv.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Miura-Stange, *op. cit.*, pp. 162-166. Harnack (*Mission und Ausbreitung*, p. 520) greatly stresses this conclusion of Celsus, but he exaggerates its importance when he says: "The *True Discourse* of Celsus is, in the last analysis, a political tract, and a scarcely veiled peace offer." If such had really been Celsus's intention, he would not have so grossly insulted those whom he merely wished to reconcile to the Empire.

of the divine origin of our doctrine concerning the Saviour, seeing that it is really indispensable to the well-being of mankind.<sup>12</sup>

But Origen does not confine himself to this first reply: he goes on to show that Christianity itself offers to the select few a special knowledge, more elevated and rarer than the faith of the simple: "Even according to our own doctrine, it is much better to adhere to doctrines with reason and wisdom than by simple faith; if the Word wished in certain cases for simple faith, it was in order not to leave mankind wholly without assistance."<sup>13</sup> The faith of the simple is indeed excellent knowledge in its own way, but it is elementary. It is the milk for babes; God in his mercy gives it to those who are too weak to ascend higher to "know God in the wisdom of God."<sup>14</sup>

In these answers we recognise Origen's own intellectual needs: the faith of the simple is not enough for him. What the mass of people believe in this way "seems clear, but it is not clear to those few chosen souls who endeavour to philosophise on our doctrine." Even so, though Origen does not wish to stop at this elementary knowledge, he recognises not only its utility, but also its truth, and that is the essential point.<sup>15</sup>

### *Prophecy*

In these preliminary discussions, Origen has set forth his own thought without concealing its delicate points. In the argumentation which fills the eight books we find the same sincerity, together

<sup>12</sup> *Contra Celsum*, I, ix. Cf. Bardy, in *Revue pratique d'apologétique*, Vol. XXIX, 1919, p. 40.

<sup>13</sup> *Contra Celsum*, I, xiii.

<sup>14</sup> Hence we are not surprised to find Origen in another passage of the *Contra Celsum* defending this faith of the simple as, not absolutely the best, but the best possible, considering the weakness of those to whom it has to be set forth. The passage has been quoted above, pp. 965-966.

<sup>15</sup> That is how the Gnostics differ from true Christians: "Those who are outside the Church do not teach the same thing at the beginning and at the end of their teaching. For first of all they turn people away from idolatry and conduct them to the Demiurge; then they change, and reject the Old Testament, thus contradicting their elementary teaching. But in the masters who belong to the Church, the end is in conformity with the principles laid down at first" (*In Proverb.*, ii, 16). In the passage quoted above, pp. 965-966, we notice the insistence with which Origen affirms this essential character of Christian teaching: the punishments it threatens "are not falsehoods"; these punishments are "true"; the elementary teaching given concerning God contains "only true things."



with a freer treatment; the apologist sets forth his proofs in all their force. "Christianity has a demonstration which is proper to it, and which is more divine than the dialectics of the Greeks. This divine demonstration is called by the apostle 'the manifestation of the Spirit and of power' " (I, ii). In these two Origen sees the proofs from prophecy and miracle, which are for him the two main arguments for Christianity.

The argument from prophecy is the favourite one put forward by Christians, and Origen vigorously criticises Celsus for passing it by instead of discussing it properly. Origen reminds him that the virginal conception of Christ was foretold, as well as his birth at Bethlehem, his passion, his twofold coming, his resurrection, and the conversions which this would bring about. Celsus says that all this might be said of a thousand others: let him try to mention one.<sup>16</sup>

Nevertheless, however explicit the prophecies may have been, and however impatiently the Jews awaited their fulfilment, the reality surpassed the anticipatory hopes. Celsus tries in vain to relegate Jesus to the crowd of Messianic pretenders. Which of these ever claimed to be the Son of God? And has Celsus ever met any Jew who expected a really divine Messiah? <sup>17</sup>

### *Christ and the Gospel*

Jesus Christ certainly put forth these claims, and he upheld them by his whole life and his passion. Here, at this central point in his argument, Origen has to deal with a preliminary question raised by Celsus: are the Gospels credible? Origen replies, as Pascal will reply many centuries later: "The many sufferings undergone by the apostles are the best proof of the sincerity of their conviction."<sup>18</sup> He presses Celsus more closely: "You think that Herodotus and Pindar cannot have lied; do you treat as myths and fables these events narrated by those who because of them were reduced to a miserable life and a violent death?" <sup>19</sup>

Elsewhere he has recourse to an equally effective argument: the

<sup>16</sup> *Contra Celsum*, II, xxviii; II, viii; III, li; I, xxxiv; I, li, etc.

<sup>17</sup> *Contra Celsum*, I, xlix, lvii.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, II, x.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, III, xxvii. Later on he protests because all the stories in Plutarch are taken seriously, while credence is refused to men who were devoted to God until death itself (V, 57).

sincerity of the evangelists is apparent in what they tell us about themselves, their weaknesses, their abandonment of Christ, and the denial by Peter (II, xv); it appears above all in the portrait they give of Jesus. Celsus is scandalised at the prayer of Christ in the Garden: "My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me." But ought he not at least to see in this narrative an evident proof of the sincerity of the narrator? He makes fun of the taunts of the soldiers, the purple mantle, the crown of thorns, and the reed: "Where, then, O Celsus, have you gathered all this information, if not in the Gospel? And you think that all this is very laughable. Those who wrote it doubtless foresaw that you and your like would laugh at it, but also that others would find therein the strength to ignore your laughter." <sup>20</sup>

As for the scandal which Celsus affects in regard to Jesus, Origen reminds him that the promises of Christ have been fulfilled, his benefits have been showered over the whole world, the Gospel has been preached everywhere, and martyrs suffer everywhere for his sake. Then he concludes:

I do not know what greater or more manifest signs Celsus could claim; unless it be that, misunderstanding the Incarnation of the Word Jesus, he will not suffer him to have anything human, or permit him to give to mankind a noble model of patience. By his sufferings Jesus has not in any way shaken our faith in himself. He has on the contrary confirmed it, at least in those who are well disposed and who are ready to learn from him that the true and happy life is not the present one here below, but belongs, as he himself says, to the future world. <sup>21</sup>

### *The Resurrection of Jesus*

Of all the facts in the life of Jesus, the one with the greatest apologetic import is his Resurrection, and this is the chief subject of the objections of Celsus and of Origen's replies. The pagan, ever seeking for parallels, recalls the adventures of Orpheus, Protesilas, Heracles, and Theseus. Origen, without discussing all these myths, shows that these heroes might have withdrawn from the sight of men and then reappeared. Jesus, on the other hand, was

<sup>20</sup> *Contra Celsum*, II, xxv, xxvi, xxxiv; III, xxxix.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, II, xlii. One should also read again the passage in VII, liv, in which Origen contrasts the celebrated speeches of the heroes of Hellenism, Anaxarchos or Epictetus, with the silence of Christ in his passion.

publicly crucified, and died in the sight of all; hence if he afterwards reappeared alive, his Resurrection is undeniable. Now this real life of the risen Saviour is attested by the apostles who witnessed it, and they maintained their testimony until death. "If they invented this story of the Resurrection, how comes it that they preached it afterwards with such force that not only did they lead others to despise death, but first despised it themselves?"<sup>22</sup>

Celsus would reduce the appearances of the risen Jesus to mere hallucinations or to dreams. How can one explain in this way the appearance to St. Thomas, or the one to the disciples on the road to Emmaus? It is objected: why did not the risen Christ manifest himself to everybody? The answer is that all were not worthy to see him, nor able to bear the sight of him.<sup>23</sup>

Moreover, the Resurrection is proved also by prophecies and miracles, and above all by the fruits of salvation it has brought to mankind. For Celsus, the risen Christ is only a phantom. "But how can a phantom which is a transient deception afterwards have such results, convert so many souls, and persuade them to do all in order to please the God who will judge them? How can a phantom expel demons, and work great miracles, not fixing itself in one particular place, like the gods in human form, but operating in the whole world, gathering together and drawing to himself by his divinity all those who are disposed to lead an upright life?"<sup>24</sup>

We recognise here one of the characteristic features in Origen's apologetics: in order to make men understand divine things, he does not isolate them, but presents them in the concrete whole which supports them and clarifies them. He does not separate Christ's Resurrection either from his life which preceded it, or from the transformation of the apostles which followed it, or from the conversion of the pagans which is its fruit.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, II, lvi; I, xxxi.

<sup>23</sup> *Contra Celsum*, II, lxi, lxii, lxvii.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, VII, xxxv.

<sup>25</sup> We find the same method in this argument in favour of the virginal conception: "Is it likely that he who has done so much for the whole human race, who has brought, as much as he could, all men, Greek and barbarians, to fear the divine judgments, to abstain from vices, and to seek to please the Creator of the universe in all things—is it likely that he should not have had a miraculous birth, but instead one the most culpable and most shameful?" (*Contra Celsum*, I, xxxii). Celsus, repeating a Jewish calumny, had affirmed that Jesus had been born of an adulterous union.

## *The Conversion of the World*

This conversion of the world is the main argument set forth by Origen, and he constantly returns to it. It is said that Jesus was not God's messenger. How then has he converted the world, and brought about so salutary and so profound a change? Let us suppose that, to show the effectiveness of his own action, someone should bring forward a hundred men whom he had brought back to a better life. Who would dare to say that he had done this without God's help? Look now upon the work of Christ, and consider whence he drew his disciples, and what he has made of them: it will be realised that he undertook and accomplished a work which was more than human. Celsus sneers at Jesus's humble birth and his position as a working man: but is not all this a further proof of the divine support? Plato records that one day a certain Seriphian pointed out to Themistocles that the latter owed his glory, not to his personal merit, but to his country. "True," replied Themistocles, "if I were of Seriphos I would be unknown; but if you were of Athens, you would not be a Themistocles." Origen continues: "To continue the parallel, our Jesus was not even a Seriphian, that is, he did not belong even to the smallest and most insignificant island; but though he was still humbler than the people of Seriphos, he has been able to shake the whole world, not only more than Themistocles the Athenian but more than Pythagoras, more than Plato, more than all the wise men or kings or military commanders of the earth." <sup>26</sup>

Celsus criticises the way in which Jesus chose his disciples. But has he not really thus proved Jesus's power, which transformed them from sinners into saints? Among the Greeks, at most one can mention Phædo and Polemon as having been rescued by philosophy from disorder. But the action of Jesus on the other hand was not confined to his twelve apostles; it has reached innumerable disciples, who are all able to repeat: "We ourselves were some time unwise, incredulous, erring, slaves to divers desires and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But when the goodness and kindness of God our Saviour appeared, he made us what we are by the laver of regeneration,

<sup>26</sup> *Contra Celsum*, I, xxvi-xxix.

and renovation of the Holy Ghost whom he hath poured forth upon us abundantly." <sup>27</sup>

In these passages—and we could quote many other similar ones <sup>28</sup>—Origen's argument is always based upon the expansion of Christianity and the conversion of souls: these two traits are not separate from each other but constitute one unique fact and manifest the action of God in the world.

### *Christians and the State*

This action is made still more evident in the persecutions which Christianity has constantly had to encounter. The repressive measures taken in times past against Socrates and Pythagoras were violent but of short duration; after the crisis the schools of these philosophers were able to develop freely. But Christians, on the contrary, have been persecuted by the Roman Senate, by the emperors, the army, the populace, even by the relatives of the faithful themselves, and only by the divine power has Christianity been able to surmount so many obstacles and vanquish the whole world which had been aroused against it. <sup>29</sup>

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, I, lxiv; III, lxvii, lxviii; VI, ii; II, lxxix. Origen also delights to contrast the fruitful action of Christ with that of the heroes of mythology whom Celsus sets up against him: "Let him tell me, then, what great things Asclepios, Dionysus or Heracles have done, what men they have converted, whose conduct or doctrine they have changed." And elsewhere: "If the Pythian Apollo was a god, he should have utilised his oracles for the conversion, salvation and moral amendment of mankind" (III, xlii; VII, vi).

<sup>28</sup> For instance, III, xxvii, in which Origen invites his opponent to compare the pagan cities with the Christian churches established therein: "The churches formed by Christ, if compared to the assemblies of the cities in which they live, appear as lighted torches in the world. For who will not confess that the least good members of the Church are often better than many of those seen in the civil assemblies? Thus the Church of God which is at Athens is gentle and constant, doing its best to please the supreme God; while the assembly of Athens is tumultuous, and cannot in any way be compared with the Church." After comparing in the same way the churches of Corinth and Alexandria with these cities, he adds: "If we compare the senate of the Church of God to the senate of each city, it will be found that some of the senators of the Church would be worthy senators of a divine city, if there were such a city of God in the world, while the civil senators in no way deserve by their morals the eminent place they occupy among their fellow citizens. Compare, in the same way, the head of each church to the heads of cities, and you will find that in the churches of God, even those who are in the lowest rank among the senators and heads, and who by comparison seem to be negligent, are yet superior to all the civil magistrates, if we put their respective virtues side by side."

<sup>29</sup> *Contra Celsum*, I, iii.

The opposition of Christians towards the State can be justified without difficulty. We are urged to remain faithful to the traditional and national cults. But are the philosophers forbidden to free themselves from the superstitions in which they were brought up? Why then try to prevent us condemning the gods of paganism, in order to turn all our homage towards the Creator of the universe? For the rest, is it not recognised that human laws deserve less respect than the natural law, which is the very law of God? And is it not above all in religion that the law of God should be respected by us?<sup>30</sup>

Christians are criticised as not serving the State. But they pray for it, as the apostle told them they ought to do. If military service is not required from the priests of idols, why require it of Christians? They keep away from magistracies, but even within the Church they decline as far as possible the charges which it is sought to place upon them.<sup>31</sup>

Let the Empire be converted to Christianity, and God will watch over it. Meanwhile, Christians devote themselves to doing good to all, to those who are within by making them better, and to those who are without by drawing them to doctrine and to works of piety. In other words they do their best to penetrate as many men as possible with the Word of God, the divine law, in order to unite them to the supreme God through his Son and his Word.<sup>32</sup>

These considerations, with which Origen closes his work, remind us of the opposition between the two cities. The Christian conquest was not yet finished; paganism, which still reigned in the Empire, would very soon wage a cruel war against the Church, and Origen was to be one of its victims. Yet the hopes of the apologist were not vain: seventy years later Rome itself would be conquered.

### *Origen's Last Years and Death*

The intense activity displayed by Origen at Cæsarea did not entirely absorb him, for he also carried on a considerable correspondence. Eusebius made a collection of his letters, and possessed

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, V, xxxv-xxxvii.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, VIII, lxxiii.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, VIII, lxix et seq.

more than a hundred of them. He mentions in particular letters addressed to the Emperor Philip, to his wife Severa, and others, "to Fabian, Bishop of Rome, and to many other heads of churches, concerning his orthodoxy." <sup>33</sup>

About 240 Origen made another journey to Athens, and stayed there some time. <sup>34</sup> Returning from there, he stopped at Nicomedia, to see his faithful friend Ambrose. <sup>35</sup> About 244 he was called to Bostra to Bishop Beryllus, and succeeded in winning him back from Monarchianism. <sup>36</sup> Shortly afterwards he intervened once more in Arabia, where some were maintaining that the soul dies with the body but will rise again with it. An important council was called, and Origen was asked to go there. He was successful in bringing back to the truth those who had allowed themselves to be led astray. <sup>37</sup>

These many interventions testify to Origen's prestige; it was certainly confined to the East, but undoubtedly was very widespread there. <sup>38</sup> Suddenly the Decian Persecution broke out. Origen's old friend, Alexander of Jerusalem, died in prison; <sup>39</sup> Origen himself was put in prison and subjected to torture. "The wicked demon made him in a special way the object of his efforts . . . he was subjected to chains and tortures, cruelties on all his body, pains inflicted by fire, and the tortures of the dungeons beneath the prison; during a number of days his feet were placed in stocks, in the fourth hole, and he was threatened with fire." <sup>40</sup>

<sup>33</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xxxvi, 3-4. Fabian was Pope from 236 to 250. We have explained above why Origen took steps at Rome under Fabian which he does not seem to have taken under Pontian. On this collection of Origen's letters, cf. Harnack, *Die Briefsammlung des Apostels Paulus und die anderen vorkonstantinischen christlichen Briefsammlungen*, ch. iv, pp. 41-52, *Die Sammlung der Briefe des Origenes*. One of the most interesting documents in this correspondence is the letter of Julius the African concerning the story of Suzanna (*ibid.*, pp. 45-47). On Julius the African, cf. Puech, *Les Apologistes grecs*, pp. 465-477.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, xxxii, 2: "Being then at Athens, he finished his commentaries on *Ezechiel*, and began those on the *Canticle of Canticles*, continuing them as far as the fifth book. When he returned to Cæsarea, he carried them on to the end, that is, to the tenth book."

<sup>35</sup> Letter to Julius the African, xv.

<sup>36</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xxxiii, 1-3; Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, lxx.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, xxxvii. We have pointed out a similar error in Tatian (cf. Bk. II, p. 574).

<sup>38</sup> We may add to the journeys we have mentioned, a visit to the holy places. Origen profited by his prolonged stay in Palestine, and followed "the footsteps of Jesus, his disciples and the prophets" (*In Joann.*, VI, xl, 204).

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, xxxix, 3.

<sup>40</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xxxix, 5.

In these sufferings, heroically supported, the aged master had one consolation: he received an affectionate letter from his old bishop, Dionysius of Alexandria. On the death of Heraclas (247) Dionysius had succeeded to the see. But he had done no more than his predecessor in the matter of recalling his master to Alexandria. It is difficult not to conclude that Origen's teaching was the chief cause of this long-standing mistrust, even among his own disciples. But at the time of the persecution, Dionysius wrote to Origen as a confessor of the faith, a letter "on martyrdom."<sup>41</sup> He also wrote concerning the Bishop of Jerusalem: "As for Alexander, that admirable man who was in prison, he has died a holy death."<sup>42</sup> We understand why Eusebius has quoted this testimony: it sealed the reconciliation between Alexandria and Jerusalem. Shortly afterwards, Origen died, probably in consequence of his tortures.<sup>43</sup>

Sixteen years earlier, Hippolytus and Pontian had been reconciled in martyrdom; seven years later, Cyprian would die a martyr's death in his turn, and St. Augustine would write concerning him: "If in this fruitful vine there was anything to prune away, the heavenly Father performed this cleansing action by his death." Origen did not, like these two saints, have the glory of dying a martyr, but like them he drank the chalice of the Lord, that chalice of salvation and redemption which he had so ardently desired.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, xlvi, 2.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, xlvi, 4.

<sup>43</sup> Eusebius has only a very brief reference to his death: "Decius did not reign for two whole years, and as soon as he was slain with his children, Gallus succeeded him. At that moment, Origen, having completed his sixty-ninth year, died." The death of Decius took place in the summer of 251.

<sup>44</sup> *Exhort. to martyrdom*, xxix-xxx.



# APOCRYPHAL WRITINGS AND MANICHÆISM

## § I. APOCRYPHAL LITERATURE<sup>1</sup>

### *New Testament Apocrypha*

TOWARDS the end of the second century and during the first years of the third, there appeared fairly generally in the East, and especially in Asia, Syria and Egypt, some so-called Gospels, Acts of Apostles, epistles and apocalypses. The Church did not recognise these works as inspired; in some places she tolerated them; but normally she regarded them with suspicion and even condemned them.<sup>2</sup> This reserve and severity were necessary in order to maintain the canon of the New Testament in all its strictness, and also in order to preserve the faithful from errors, not only historical but also doctrinal, which were springing up in this apocryphal literature. Subsequently, in the Middle Ages, the former danger seemed to have vanished: the canonical books were by that time in unquestioned possession of their exclusive authority and had no longer anything to fear through the spread of the apocryphal works. As

<sup>1</sup> Bibliography.—Tischendorf, *Evangelia Apocrypha*, 2nd edn., 1876; Lipsius-Bonnet, *Acta Apostolorum apocrypha*, Leipzig, 1891-1903, 3 vols.; E. Preuschen, *Antilegomena*, Giessen, 1905; Bousquet and Amann, *Les Apocryphes du Nouveau Testament*, 3 vols. published so far; *Le Protévangile de Jacques*, by Amann, 1910; *Les Actes de Paul*, by Vouaux, 1913; *Les Actes de Pierre*, by Vouaux, 1922; E. Hennecke, *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen*, 2nd edn., Tübingen, 1923; E. Hennecke, *Handbuch zu den neutestamentlichen Apokryphen*, 1914, 2 vols.: the first contains a German translation of the texts with introductions; the second contains notes; M. R. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, Oxford 1924; E. Amann, art. *Apocryphes du Nouveau Testament*, in *Supplément to the Dictionnaire de la Bible*, cols. 460-533; G. Bardy, art. *Apocryphes* in *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, Vol. II, pp. 752-765. Editions and studies on the various works will be mentioned below.

<sup>2</sup> Towards the end of the fourth century, the Priscillianists attributed to the apocryphal works an authority to which they had no claim. Cf. Priscillian, *Liber de fide et de apocryphis*, ed. Schepps, in the Vienna *Corpus*, Vol. XVIII, pp. 44-61. The Church protested against this innovation: cf. Innocent I, *Letters to Exuperius of Toulouse* (Epist., vi, 7, in Migne, P.L., Vol. XX, 501-502); Decree of Gelasius, *De libris recipiendis et non recipiendis*, A.D. 496 (Migne, P.L., Vol. LIX); cf. Zahn, *Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons*, Vol. II, i, pp. 244-246, 259-267.

for the danger of heresy, this was averted by purifying the books, in order to seek beneath Gnostic accretions some harmless primitive tradition. Literature and the religious arts could then utilise without scruple this fruitful source, which was thus thought to have been purified.

The interest aroused at first by these old books diminished later on when it was more clearly realised that the "legends" they contain are for the most part only the work of imagination. Even so, provided we do not seek in them the authentic history of the apostles, and still less that of Christ, we may still find in them the religious ideas of the Christians who wrote them.

About the year 200, Tertullian, having occasion in his *Treatise on Baptism*<sup>3</sup> to mention the *Acts of Paul*, writes thus: "In Asia, the priest who had forged this work, as though to complete the authority of Paul by his own, was convicted by his own admission that he had done it through love for Paul, and was deprived." In this incident we are shown the Church's severity when there was a question of defending the piety of the faithful against those who forged apocryphal *Acts*; we see also the kind of excuse advanced by their authors: they wrote through love of the apostles. The canonical Scriptures had, in their view, said too little about the apostles, their preaching, and above all their martyrdom; the apocryphal works provided the faithful with the circumstantial accounts they desired; there should be *Acts of John*, *Paul*, *Peter*, *Andrew*, *Thomas*, *Philip*. The same pious curiosity wanted to know more about the childhood of Jesus; it desired greater knowledge about *Mary*, *Joseph* and the whole family of the Lord: all this will be provided by the *Protevangelium* of *James*, the *Gospels of the Infancy*, the *Gospel of the Birth of Mary*, and the *Gospel of Joseph the Carpenter*. Other apocryphal works will contain accounts of the *Passion*, the *Descent into Hell*, and of the *Resurrection of Jesus*; there will also be *Apocalypses* of *Peter*, *Paul* and *Thomas*, a collective *Letter from the Apostles*, and apocryphal *Letters of St. Paul*.

### Popular Literature

We need not describe all this literature here in detail. We must confine ourselves to the books which we can date in the second

<sup>3</sup> *De baptismo*, xvii.

century or the first years of the third.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, these are by far the most interesting ones. If we study them as a whole, we notice that they possess several common features. The first and most apparent of these is that they set forth, not theological speculation, but popular piety. They are contemporary with the *Stromata* and the treatise *De principiis*. Between these two groups the distance is great, as between the *Summa Theologica* and the *Golden Legend*; after studying the works of Clement and Origen, it is pleasant to read these pious and simple imaginative writings in which Christian folk then delighted.

### Virginity

If we try to discover the religious ideas which are most prominent in them, we notice in the first place the love of virginity. This is the chief theme of the *Protevangelium* of James;<sup>5</sup> it is also one of the doctrines most constantly preached in the apocryphal *Acts*. The story of Paul and Thecla has charmed many generations of Christians. Certainly, as we shall point out later on, we notice

<sup>4</sup> These are: the *Gospel of Peter*, ed. Vaganay, 1930 (it seems to belong to 120 to 130, and to have been written in Syria); the *Protevangelium of James*, ed. Amann, 1910, ed. Michel, 1911 (written between 150 and 180); the first two parts, concerning the infancy of Mary and the birth of Jesus, belong to the first half of the second century (cf. Amann, art. *Apocryphes*, col. 483, the book in the form we have it to-day hardly goes back earlier than the fifth century); the *Acts of John* (shortly after 150, in Asia); the *Acts of Paul* (between 160 and 170, perhaps at Antioch in Pisidia); the *Acts of Peter* (about 200, probably in Asia); the *Acts of Thomas* (in a Syriac-speaking country, about the beginning of the third century); the *Acts of Andrew* (about the beginning of the third century, in an unknown country); the *Apocalypse of Peter* (before 180, perhaps towards the end of the reign of Hadrian, in Egypt); the *Letter of the Apostles*, ed. by Guerrier, in *Patrologie Orientale*, Vol. IX, 1913, under the title: *The Testament in Galilee of Our Lord Jesus Christ*; by C. Schmidt, Leipzig, 1919: *Gespräche Jesu mit seinen Jüngern nach der Auferstehung* (before 180, cf. Schmidt, *op. cit.*, p. 399, in Asia, *ibid.*, p. 370).

<sup>5</sup> Not only does the author defend the virginity of Mary in her conception, childbirth, and her whole life, but he is even careful about legal purity: Anne consecrated Mary to the Lord before her birth (iv, 1); she preserved her from all impure contact: "When she was six months old, her mother put her on the ground to see if she could stand upright. The child took seven steps and returned to her mother, who lifted her up saying: 'As the Lord my God liveth, you must not walk upon this ground until I have taken you to the Lord's Temple.' And she made a sanctuary in her bedroom, and did not let her take hold of anything impure or soiled. And she called those of the daughters of the Hebrews who were without stain, and these amused her" (vi, 1). On all this, cf. Amann, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-40.

in it some exaggeration in the preaching of continence, but in spite of all this, one is struck by the high ideal set forth by the Apostle, and still more perhaps by the irresistible impression it produced on Thecla: here we have an example of a Christian conquest, rescuing a soul from its pagan surroundings and giving it to Christ. The author of these *Acts* pictures Paul at Iconium in the house of Onesiphorus. It is a joyful assembly; they kneel down and pray, they break bread, and talk of continence and the resurrection. Paul says:

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Blessed are they who keep their flesh chaste, for they shall be the temple of God.

Blessed are the continent, for God will converse with them.

Blessed are they who have renounced this world, for they shall be pleasing to God.

Blessed are they who have wives as though they had not, for they shall have God for an inheritance.

Blessed are they who fear God, for they shall be the angels of God.<sup>6</sup>

This discourse continues; a young girl hears it from the window of a neighbouring house. She is a virgin, espoused to Thamyras.

Night and day she listened to the word of God preached by Paul concerning chastity, faith in Christ, and prayer. She did not move from the window, and overwhelmed with joy, she was drawn to the faith. And as she saw many women and virgins introduced to Paul, she wished herself to be considered worthy to stand face to face with Paul and to hear the word of Christ. For she had not yet seen Paul's features, but had only heard his speech.<sup>7</sup>

Did this ardent preaching and the attraction it exercised exceed the bounds of orthodoxy? We cannot affirm this in the case of the *Acts of Paul*,<sup>8</sup> and possibly the *Acts of Peter* are equally free.<sup>9</sup> On

<sup>6</sup> *Acts of Paul*, v, p. 154. This ideal is clearly narrower than that of the beatitudes in the Gospel. Cf. J. Lebreton, *Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ*, Vol. I, p. 150, n. But it would be unfair to regard the author as a sectary: he exalts virginity, but without condemning marriage as was done by the encratic Gnostics. Cf. the note by Vouaux on this text p. 154.

<sup>7</sup> *Acts of Paul*, vii, p. 158.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Vouaux, *Les Actes de Paul*, pp. 79-80. But we must note what is said of the preaching of Paul in ch. xii: "He separates the young men from the women, and virgins from men, saying: 'There can be no resurrection for you unless you remain chaste, and if instead of soiling your flesh you keep it pure.'"

<sup>9</sup> Here, however, the writer goes further: "Many women, influenced by the preaching on chastity, separated from their husbands; also men kept away from

the other hand, the condemnation of marriage is manifest in the *Acts of John, Thomas, and Andrew*. In a fragment of the *Acts of John*, the apostle, invited to a wedding, explains to the spouse that the conjugal act is a sin. After a vehement diatribe,<sup>10</sup> he concludes thus:

Now that you have heard this, my children, unite yourselves by an inseparable, true and holy marriage, waiting for the one incomparable and true Spouse who comes from Heaven, Christ the eternal Spouse.<sup>11</sup>

In another place, in the Greek text of the *Acts*, we read that Drusiana, pressed by her husband Andronicus, refuses him the conjugal act, in spite of his threats of death: "She much preferred to die rather than to accomplish this horror."<sup>12</sup>

In the *Acts of Thomas*, on the wedding day of the king's daughter Christ appears to the young spouses in the guise of the twin brother of Thomas, and says to them: "Know that if you renounce this unclean union, you will become holy and pure temples, be delivered from all kinds of pains and sufferings, and be no longer troubled by the cares of life and of children, whose end is death. . . ." <sup>13</sup>

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the beds of their wives, because they wished to honour God in holiness and chastity" (ch. xxxiv; cf. xxxiii). Vouaux writes this note (*op. cit.*, *Introduction*, p. 81): "The *Acts of Peter* seem to attack marriage. But it must be borne in mind that that is but an ascetical ideal, which does not seem to correspond to a historic reality, and merely expresses the idea which the author had of a period greatly venerated by him."

<sup>10</sup> This fragment, conserved in Latin in a Wurtzburg MS., has been edited by Dom D. de Bruyne, in *Revue Bénédictine*, Vol. XXV, 1908, p. 156. The following few lines will show its tone: "Filioli, dum adhuc caro vestra munda est et intactum corpus habetis nec pereuntis nec sordidati ab inimicissimo et impudentissimo sanctimonii satana; scitote ergo plenius mysterium conjunctionis: experimentum est serpentis, doctrinæ ignorantia, seminis injuria, mortis charisma, extinctionis munus, . . . insultatio inimici, impedimentum quod a domino separat, initium inobaudienciæ, vitæ finis, et mors."

<sup>11</sup> On this text cf. James, *op. cit.*, p. 266. Other fragments of similar origin and the same character will be found in the article by Dom de Bruyne.

<sup>12</sup> Ch. lxiii. See also the discourse of John to Andronicus in ch. lxxviii: to console him on the death of his wife, he puts before him all the cares which come from a wife and children. These low considerations resemble the ethics of the Cynics rather than the teaching of St. Paul.

<sup>13</sup> Ch. xii. We find the same doctrine in the discourse of Thomas at Mygdonia (ch. lxxxviii): "Thy unclean union with thy husband will be of no service to thee if thou art deprived of the true union." We find the same in the discourse of Andrew to Maximilla to confirm him in his distaste "for a life which is shameful and unclean" (*Acts of Andrew*, v).

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### Encratism

In all these texts, what is apparent is not only the love of chastity but also a horror of marriage, which is regarded as a shameful defilement. In order to turn young people away from it more effectively, the chief characters in the *Acts* do not content themselves, as did St. Paul, with preaching the love of the Lord and the happiness of belonging unreservedly to him; they bring forward considerations of a low egoism concerning the cares of marriage and the difficulties of children. These features reveal, not the ideal of purity preached by the Church, but Encratic Gnosticism, and in point of fact the books which manifest them, the *Acts of John* and the *Acts of Thomas*, are precisely those which clearly show a Gnostic influence.<sup>14</sup>

Piety, like moral teaching, appears in these *Acts*, sometimes in a pure form and sometimes rather corrupted. Its warm aspiration is, in the *Acts of Paul and Peter*, Christian for the most part, but in the *Acts of John and Thomas* it is weighed down with the heavy fumes of Gnosticism.

### The Christ

The centre of religion, and the One to whom prayer is usually addressed, is Christ. This is one of the characteristic features of popular piety at this period. The official liturgical prayer is addressed generally to God the Father, but the prayers of Christians in their daily life, and especially the prayers of martyrs in their agony, are addressed to Christ.<sup>15</sup> Accordingly, we are not surprised to find this particular orientation of prayer in these *Acts of Apostles* which are above all *Acts of Martyrs*.

These prayers are often moving and touching in their character. Thus, in the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, the latter, returning to Iconium, enters the house of Onesiphorus, where previously she had heard the preaching of Paul. She weeps and cries out:

<sup>14</sup> On this encratic tendency, cf. Bardy, *art. cit.*, cols. 756-758.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 174-247. Origen, in his *Treatise on Prayer*, chs. xv and xvi, condemns these prayers of the simple: "In their excessive simplicity, some err through foolishness, through lack of consideration and attention: they pray to the Son either with the Father or without the Father." But Origen himself more than once in his own religious practice gives the lie to the strictness of his theory. In his homilies, speaking to the simple and praying with them, he prays as they do. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 239-242; *Revue d'histoire ecclési.*, Vol. XX, 1924, pp. 19-27 and *infra*, p. 1082.

O my God, God of this house in which the light shone forth for me, Christ Jesus, Son of God, my succour in prison, my succour before the governors, my succour in the fire, my succour among the beasts, thou art truly God, and to thee be glory for ever, Amen.<sup>16</sup>

St. Peter, when fastened to his cross, thanks Christ in a long prayer which ends in an exhortation to the faithful:

Thou art to me a father, thou art to me a mother, thou are to me a brother, a friend, a servant, a steward; thou art the whole, and the whole is in thee; thou art being, and there is no other thing which is save thee alone. You also, my brethren, must take refuge in him, and having learnt that in him alone you exist, you will obtain that of which he speaks to you, that which the eye hath not seen, nor the ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man. We ask thee therefore that which thou hast promised to give us, O Jesus without stain, we praise thee, we give thee thanks, we recognise in glorifying thee, we who are still weak, that thou alone art God and that there is no other, to whom be glory now and for ever and ever, Amen.<sup>17</sup>

We sometimes find the same idea in the eucharistic prayers. Thus, we read in the *Acts of Thomas*:

O Jesus, who hast given us the grace to be participators in the eucharist of thy holy body and thy blood, behold we dare to approach thy eucharist, and to call upon thy holy name. Come and unite thyself to us.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, xlii.

<sup>17</sup> *Martyrdom*, xxxix. On the character of this prayer, cf. the note by Vouaux, p. 454, and *Historie du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, p. 236. We must not infer from this prayer that the author confuses the Father and the Son, any more than from the exclamation of Ancharis in the *Acts of Paul*: "There is no other than Jesus Christ, the Son of the Blessed One, to whom be glory for ever" (ed. James, p. 271).

<sup>18</sup> *Acts of Thomas*, xlix. The chapter which immediately follows continues the story of this eucharist, inserting a long prayer to the Holy Spirit which is clearly of Gnostic origin: "Come O perfect compassion; come O communion of the male; come thou who knowest the mysteries of him who is chosen; come thou who sharest in all the combats of the noble athlete; come O rest which shows the greatness of the whole greatness; come thou who dost manifest hidden things, and givest knowledge of ineffable things; the holy dove which generates the two twins; come O hidden mother; come thou who dost manifest thyself in thy actions, who givest joy and repose to those who unite themselves to thee; come and unite thyself to us in this eucharist which we celebrate in thy name, and in the agape which reunites us at thy call." The difference between these two chapters xlix and l is evident even at first reading. But we must remember that the whole book of the *Acts of Thomas* is suspect. Cf. G. Bornkamm, *Mythos und Legende in den apokryphen Thomas-Akten*, Göttingen, 1933, and *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XXIII, 1933, pp. 368-369.

With this we may compare the following eucharistic prayer we read in the *Acts of John*:

O thou who hast woven this crown in thy hair, O Jesus; thou who hast adorned the imperishable flower of thy countenance with all these flowers; thou who has given us these words; thou who alone takest care of thy servants, the one doctor who healest them through love; thou the only gracious and humble, the only merciful and good; the only saviour and just one; thou who ever seest all things, art in all things, art present everywhere, containest all things, fillest all things, Christ Jesus, God and Lord; thou who by thy gifts and thy mercy protectest those who hope in thee; thou who knowest perfectly the cunning of our perpetual enemy and all the assaults which he plans against us; thou the one Lord, come to the help of thy servants. Yes, Lord.

Having asked for bread, the apostle John gives thanks thus:

What praise, what offering, what eucharist shall we invoke in breaking this bread, other than thee only, Lord Jesus? We glorify thy name spoken by the Son. We glorify thine entrance through the door. We glorify thy resurrection which thou hast made known to us. We glorify thy way. We glorify thy seed, the word, grace, faith, salt, the precious stone, the treasure, the plough, the net, the greatness, the diadem, him who for our sakes has been called the Son of Man, him who has given us truth, rest, knowledge, power, the commandment, trust, hope, love, liberty, and refuge in thyself. For thou only art, O Lord, the root of immortality and the source of incorruptibility and the foundation of the ages. And thou hast now been called by all these names for our sakes in order that, invoking thee by all these names, we may know thy greatness which we have not known until now, but which is visible only to the pure, and represented in the one man who is thine.<sup>19</sup>

These prayers are touching, but while their fervour moves us, we are more than once disconcerted by their overlaid character, and their tone and tendency, which are not always those of the Gospel. Some phrases are still more disturbing, and have a plainly Gnostic character.<sup>20</sup> With the prayers we have just described we can compare some invocations of the Cross. The mystery of the Cross is especially dear to the authors of the *Acts*. Sometimes the religious tone is simple and pure, as in this prayer of St. Andrew:

<sup>19</sup> *Acts of John*, cviii and cix; cf. Bardy, *art. cit.*, col. 760.

<sup>20</sup> We have noticed this in the *Acts of Thomas*, *supra*, p. 992, n. 18: we shall also find it in the *Acts of John*, xciv-xcvi, *infra*, p. 995.



Hail, Cross which has been consecrated by the body of Christ. . . . Cross long desired, dearly loved, unceasingly sought after and now at last prepared for my soul which desireth thee, receive me and give me back to my Master, so that he may receive me through thee who hath redeemed me through thee.<sup>21</sup>

At other times we are overwhelmed by a pretentious rhetoric. Thus, St. Peter when crucified head downwards finds in this torture the key to the mystery of nature.<sup>22</sup> Elsewhere things are worse, and we find ourselves in a complete Gnosticism. Thus in the *Acts of John*, at the hour of the crucifixion, when darkness covers the earth, John flies to the Mount of Olives:

My Lord appeared to me in the midst of the cave, wholly illumined it, and said to me: "John, because of the crowd which is below in Jerusalem I am crucified and pierced by the lances and by the reeds, and given vinegar and gall to drink. But to thee I speak, listen to my word. . . ." And he showed me a cross of light which was upright . . . and I saw at the top of the cross the Lord himself. He had no form; he was only a voice, a voice, not as those which we are accustomed to hear,

<sup>21</sup> *Passio Andreæ*, x. The date of this text is uncertain; cf. Hennecke, *Apokryphen*, pp. 249-251.

<sup>22</sup> "Know the mystery of all nature, and what was the beginning of all things. The first man, of whose race I bear the image with the head upside down, shows a nature different from what it was once; for it became dead, having no movement. Being upside down, he who had thrown down his first state organised the whole order of the world in the image of his vocation, upside down as he was, and showed as right that which was left, and left that which was right; and he changed all the signs of his nature, to the point of considering beautiful that which is not, and as good that which is evil. . . . This is the idea I put before your eyes; and the way in which you see me hanging is the image of the man who was the first to be born. Therefore, my beloved, you who now hear this, and you who are about to hear it, must depart from this primitive error and raise yourselves up. For it is fitting to be fastened to the cross of Christ, who is the extended, unique and sole Word, of whom the Spirit says: 'What then is Christ, if not the Word, the echo of God?' Hence this word will be the upright part of the cross, to which I am crucified; the echo will be the cross piece, the nature of man; and the nail which fastens the transversal part to the upright part in the centre, is conversion and repentance by man." (*Martyrdom*, xxxviii, pp. 442-450.)

This long discourse, of which we quote only a part, is quite unbelievable at such a moment. We notice in it the symbolism of the Cross, and that of the elements of right and left: these speculations were then fairly frequent on the frontiers of Gnosticism and authentic Christianity. For the symbolism of the Cross, cf. Justin, *Apol.*, I, lx; *Acts of John*, xcvi; *Acts of Andrew*, xx; for the forces of right and left, *Acts of John*, xcvi; *Acts of Philip*, cxl; *Acts of Thomas*, xcii; cf. Bornkamm, *op. cit.*, p. 66; *Clementine Homilies*, ii, 16; vii, 2; vii, 3; xx, 3.

but a voice which was sweet and beautiful, and truly the voice of a God.

This luminous and formless apparition explains the mystery of the Cross:

. . . The Cross is not this cross of wood which you will see on the way down from here; and I am not the one who is fastened to it; I whom you do not see now, but whose voice alone you hear. People have believed me to be what I am not. I am not what I was according to the others, the crowd; they will say mean and unworthy things of me. The place of rest can neither be seen nor described; much less can I, the Lord, be seen. . . . As long as you do not say you are wholly mine, I am not what I am (*or was*). But if you listen to me, in listening you shall be what I am, and I shall be what I was in possessing thee, as I am with myself. For it is by me that you are that (which I am). As for the crowd, have no care; despise those who are outside the mystery. Know that I am wholly with the Father and the Father with me.<sup>23</sup>

### *Docetism*

We see here the final stage of this sentimental and strange mysticism, so far removed from authentic Christianity, and reserved for a little group of initiates who think they are the recipients of divine mysteries and who despise the mass of the faithful. The contempt for the flesh which is affirmed in the condemnation of marriage perverts Christology by reducing the flesh of Christ to a mere appearance. This Docetism, evident in the interpretation of the Passion, is also manifest in the preceding chapters. John, recalling his memories of his relations with Jesus, depicts him as taking all forms; when he calls the sons of Zebedee on the borders of the Lake, he shows himself to James in the form of a child and to John as a fine young man. On other occasions he seems small and ugly, and then so great that his head touches the sky.

Sometimes I wished to take hold of him, and I found a material and solid body; another day, when I touched him I felt an immaterial, incorporeal, and, as it were, an in-existent substance. When he was invited by a certain Pharisee, we ourselves went with him. Our hosts gave a piece of bread to each one of us. He also took one; he blessed it and shared it amongst us. A small piece satisfied us, and our own pieces of

<sup>23</sup> *Acts of John*, xcvi-c.

bread remained intact, and those who had invited him were in amazement. Often when I walked with him I looked for the imprint of his footsteps on the ground, for I saw him raised up from the ground; but never was I able to see any imprint.<sup>24</sup>

Some fragments of these chapters were read at the Council of Constantinople in 754, and led to a fresh condemnation of the *Acts of John*.<sup>25</sup> This condemnation cannot surprise us, for as the first editor of the work wrote, "this whole discourse is the best popular exposition we possess of the Docetic view of Our Lord's Person."<sup>26</sup>

### *Gnostic Influences*

In these same chapters of the *Acts of John*, we find a Gnostic hymn which the Priscillianist heretics were still accustomed to recite in the time of St. Augustine:<sup>27</sup>

Before being seized by the wicked Jews, [Jesus] gathered us all together and said to us:

"Before I am delivered up to these men, let us sing to the Father, and then let us go to that which is to come to pass." He bade us form a circle, holding each other by the hand, with himself in the midst. He said to us: "Answer me Amen." Then he began the hymn:

"Glory to thee, O Father."

And we who formed the circle, said "Amen."

"Glory to thee, O Word, Glory to thee, O Grace, Amen."

"Glory to thee, Holy Spirit. Glory to thy Glory, Amen."

"We praise thee, O Father. We thank thee, O Light in which there dwells no darkness. Amen."

While we give thanks, I say:

"I want to be saved, and I want to save. Amen."

"I want to be delivered, and I want to deliver. Amen."

"I want to be wounded, and I want to wound. Amen."

"I want to be born, and I want to bear. Amen."

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, lxxxviii-xciv. These chapters and the following ones (to ch. cv) were published for the first time by James in 1897, from a Vienna MS. (*Apocrypha anecdotata*, II, *Texts and Studies*, V, 1).

<sup>25</sup> Cf. James, *op. cit.*, p. xii.

<sup>26</sup> *Apocryphal New Testament*, p. 250. We may add that in the other apocryphal books, while this Docetism is not so plainly set forth it is often implicit in the narratives or the discourses: *Acts of Peter*, xxi; *Acts of Thomas*, xlviii, cliii; *Acts of John*, lxxxii, etc. Cf. Hennecke, *Apokryphen*, p. 173, and W. Bauer, *Das Leben Jesu im Zeitalter der neutestamentlichen Apokryphen*, Tübingen, 1909, pp. 40-45.

<sup>27</sup> Augustine, *Epist.*, ccxxxvii, *ad Ceretium*.

"I want to eat, and I want to be eaten. Amen.

"I want to hear, and I want to be heard. Amen.

"I want to be understood, being all intelligence. Amen.

"I want to be washed, and I want to wash. Amen.

"Grace dances. I want to play the flute. Take part all of you in the dance. Amen.

"I want to lament. Weep, all of you. Amen.

"The ogdoad sings with us. Amen.

"The number twelve dances above. Amen.

"The whole takes part in the dance. Amen.

"Whosoever dances not, does not know what is coming. Amen. . . ."

This strange hymn has led to many commentaries. We cannot attempt here to solve its problems; it suffices to indicate its character. The chants with a refrain, accompanied by a sacred dance, are not without parallels in Hellenic and Gnostic literature.<sup>28</sup> Whether the one we have just quoted was in fact derived from an earlier source, or composed after these models by the author of the *Acts*, is difficult to say and is comparatively unimportant. But what is of great interest is to see that at this time such compositions could lead astray folk who considered themselves Christians, and could still exercise their attraction three centuries later in certain heretical circles.

### *Religious Romances*

The features which we have pointed out in the apocryphal *Acts* indicate certain tendencies in popular piety, and it is from that standpoint that we have considered them. But for that purpose we have had to isolate them from the narratives in which they are found. It must be admitted that these narratives are, on the whole, disconcerting for a Christian reader.

They are works of the imagination, closely related to the religious romances of the period. We are given accounts of incidents in which history is treated with complete freedom, and geography also. What is still more regrettable is that the authors of the *Acts* did what was done by the romantic writers of their time; they utilised episodes created by their predecessors, often of doubtful religious or moral value. Thus the author of the *Acts of John*, who was so zealous in preaching chastity, nevertheless appropriated the

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Hennecke, *Apokryphen*, p. 172.

story of the matron of Ephesus. He considered he had sufficiently corrected it by making the guilty receive punishment, but he did not really destroy its grossly immoral character.<sup>29</sup> Still more frequently, elements borrowed in this way display the pagan or Gnostic character they possessed originally: this is the case with the myth of the soul which we read in the *Acts of Thomas*.<sup>30</sup>

### *The Clementine Apocrypha*<sup>31</sup>

The Clementine apocrypha are almost contemporary with the apocryphal *Acts* we have just studied, and in many features of literary composition they resemble them. These too are imaginative

<sup>29</sup> *Acts of John*, lxiii-lxxvi: this is the story of Drusiana and Callimachus. Cf. Hennecke, *Handbuch*, p. 520. In its pagan and grossly indecent form the story of the matron of Ephesus is found in Petronius, *Satyricon*, cxi et seq.

<sup>30</sup> *Acts*, cviii-cxiii. This myth or chant is found in the Syriac text, and has been translated by A. A. Bevan, *The Hymn of the Soul*, in *Texts and Studies*, Vol. V, 3 (Cambridge, 1897), by G. Hoffmann in *Zeitschr. f. N. T. W.*, Vol. IV, 1903, pp. 273-294; while the Greek text is in *Acta Thomæ*, cviii-cxiii. A son of a king, clothed while yet a child in a robe woven with gold and covered with precious stones, is deprived of it and sent from the East to Egypt in order to find a pearl guarded by a dragon. In Egypt he is led astray, and eats Egyptian food; immediately he forgets his origin and his mission, and becomes, like the other Egyptians, subject to the king of the country. But his father hears of this, and sends him a letter in which he reminds him of his real identity, and of the glorious robe he once wore. Reading the letter, the exile comes to himself, triumphs over the dragon, seizes the pearl, and returns to his father. His royal vestment is given back to him, and when he sees it he recognises himself.

This chant is prior to the redaction of the *Acts*; it is attributed by many to Bardesanes, by V. Burch to Cerdon (*Journal of Theol. Studies*, Vol. XIX, 1918, pp. 145-161). Bornkamm (*op. cit.*, pp. 111-117) sees in this "hymn of the Redeemer" an old Jewish Gnostic hymn concerning the salvation of Israel brought back from Egypt; the old Iranian myth of a redeemed redeemer was, it is suggested, modified later in order to be applied to Mani.

<sup>31</sup> Editions: The *Recognitions* will be found in Migne's *Greek Patrology*, with the Latin translation by Rufinus, Vol. I, 1157-1455; the *Homilies* in Greek text, *ibid.*, Vol. II, 25-468. P. de Lagarde published in 1861 the *Recognitions* in a Syriac translation; in 1865 the *Homilies* in Greek text. *Letters to Virgins*, Syriac text and Latin translation in Migne, P.G., Vol. I, 349-452.

Studies: H. Waitz, *Die Pseudoklementinen*, in *Texte und Untersuchungen*, Vol. XXV, 4, Leipzig, 1904; C. Schmidt, *Studien zu den Pseudo-Clementinen*, *ibid.*, Vol. XLVI, 1, Leipzig, 1929; O. Cullmann, *Le problème littéraire et historique du roman pseudo-clementin*, Paris, 1930. [See also Abbot Chapman's article in *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. IV—Tr.]

We cannot deal here with the discussion of the literary problem, which is hotly disputed and very obscure. According to Waitz, the *Recognitions* and the *Homilies* are independent revisions of a work which served as a basis for both. This work, composed at Rome by a Catholic under Alexander Severus between

accounts of events and travels, utilising earlier sources, Jewish or pagan. Among these sources we notice in the first place the story of rediscovery which occupies a prominent place in the *Homilies* and the chief part of the *Recognitions*.<sup>32</sup> We can also detect a Jewish apology which the editor has inserted into his narrative.<sup>33</sup> Clement of Rome appears as one of the heroes and the narrator of these stories, hence their name of "Clementines."

### *Celibacy and Marriage*

While the literary form of the two categories of apocrypha we are considering here is very similar, their moral and religious tendencies differ profoundly. In the apocryphal *Acts*, virginity is constantly preached, not only as an ideal of perfection but often as a strict duty. In the Clementine apocrypha, on the contrary, celibacy is regarded with suspicion. These books urge marriage not only on

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220 and 230, itself depends on two chief sources: the *Preaching of Peter* and the *Acts of Peter*; the first of these two texts was, it is suggested, written in Palestine, probably at Caesarea, in Judeo-Christian circles, between 135 and 138, the second at Antioch between 150 and 230. According to Schmidt, the *Acts of Peter* utilised in the Clementines are the *Acts* composed about 200 in Asia Minor, which we have in great part in the text of the MS. of Vercelli (Vouaux, *Actes de Pierre*, pp. 230 *et seq.*). The basic work was composed, not at Rome but in Palestinian Syria, probably in Transjordan, about the same date as the *Didascalia*, with which it is closely connected, i.e. about 220-230. As for the sources of this basic work, Schmidt distinguishes, besides the *Acts of Peter*, the *Preaching of Peter*, which would also belong about the year 200; a Jewish apology, prior to 135; and a story of rediscovery, dating in the year 200. According to Schmidt, the author of the *Recognitions* knew and utilised the *Homilies*. Cullmann has followed in the main Schmidt's hypothesis; the rectifications he has suggested do not seem to be altogether justified.

On this literary problem, see also the articles by Cerfaux in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XV, 1925, pp. 489-511; Vol. XVI, 1926, pp. 5-20; Vol. XVIII, 1928, pp. 143-163; article by Cadiou, *ibid.*, Vol. XX, 1930, pp. 506-528; Schwartz, in *Zeitschr. f. N. T. W.*, Vol. XXXI, 1932, pp. 151-199.

<sup>32</sup> Matilda, married to Faustus and the mother of three children, Faustinus, Faustinianus and Clement, left Rome for Athens with her two eldest children. The three travellers disappeared; Faustus set out to look for them but disappeared in his turn. Clement only was left, and he went through the world in quest of the truth; he found Peter and attached himself to him, then he discovered in succession his mother, brothers and father.

<sup>33</sup> On this apology, cf. Schmidt, *op. cit.*, pp. 296-298; Cullmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 116 *et seq.* In the *Homilies*, iv-vi, Clement has a discussion at Tyre with Appion; in the *Recognitions*, viii-x, the discussion takes place at Laodicea; Appion does not appear in it, but only Faustus, Clement Nicetus and Aquila, with Peter presiding. In each case the same themes are treated: polytheism, astrology and Providence.

young people, but also on persons advanced in age, for fear lest the heat of concupiscence should introduce a plague into the Church through fornication and adultery. For the sake of chastity, not only the presbyters but all Christians should hasten to marry.<sup>34</sup>

This suspicion in regard to celibacy does not come from an authentic Christian tradition; we find it among the Ebionites, as they are described by Epiphanius;<sup>35</sup> we find it also in the *Didascalia Apostolorum*, composed in Transjordanian in the first half of the third century.<sup>36</sup>

This unfavourable attitude towards celibacy was certainly not universal in the Eastern Church at that time. The writings of Origen and his own personal practice bear witness to the esteem in which virginity was held. We find a still more explicit testimony in the *Letters to Virgins* written in the name of St. Clement.<sup>37</sup>

The writings which we have been studying here, the apocryphal Clementines and the *Didascalia*, reveal to us the particular and very divergent tendencies of some Christian communities of Transjordanian in the first half of the third century.

The similarities which we have pointed out between these two groups of writings are shown not only in the doctrine concerning continency and marriage, but also in the concern for legal purity,

<sup>34</sup> *Homilies*, iii, 68. Peter himself lives with his wife: *Homilies*, xiii, 1.

<sup>35</sup> *Hær.*, XXX, xviii, 2-3: "They constrain young people to marry, even at unsuitable ages . . . and not only do they enter a first union, but if anyone wishes to break his first marriage and contract a second they allow this, and not only a second marriage but a third and even as far as a seventh."

<sup>36</sup> Ch. xxiii: "Take care to find wives for your children, and marry them when they are of age, lest in the heat of youth they commit fornication with pagans, and you become responsible for this before God in the day of judgment." As Dom Connolly remarks in his edition (p. xlv): "There is no mention in the *Didascalia* of an order of virgins, or of virginity at all. On the contrary, parents are warned to have their children married at an early age to save them from the dangers of incontinency. See especially chapters xvii and xxii." At the same time, in contrast to the Ebionites mentioned by Epiphanius, the author does not recommend a second marriage, and absolutely condemns a third: ch. xiv, pp. 130-131, and p. xliii. For the episcopate one should choose one who has been a good father and a good husband: "Si est castus, si uxorem castam aut fidelem habuit aut habet, si filios caste educavit et erudiens produxit. . . ."

<sup>37</sup> These two letters seem to have been written in Greek; they are conserved in a Syriac version, and in part in a Coptic version. They are commonly dated in the third century. The author seems to have been an Egyptian; the persons addressed are ascetics in Syria and Palestine; the hermit life is not yet organised, but already it is envisaged. Cf. F. Martinez, *L'Ascétisme chrétien pendant les trois premiers siècles de l'Eglise*, Paris, 1913, pp. 171-194.

the observance of the laws concerning forbidden foods, and by the ideas of the Law and of prophecy.<sup>38</sup> The same problems are often discussed, but the solutions proposed are frequently divergent and even opposed.

Thus, Peter, teaching the pagan masses the elements of Christianity, enjoins upon them ritual purity: a man should abstain from all intercourse with his wife when she is in her menstrual period; married people should take a bath after they have had sexual intercourse.<sup>40</sup> Peter himself constantly bathed, and his disciples with him.<sup>41</sup>

In the *Homilies* and the *Recognitions*, Peter is a strict vegetarian: "I live only on bread and olives, and rarely eat vegetables; . . . for my spirit which beholds on high all the eternal goods does not look at any of those here below."<sup>42</sup>

He thinks it is "against nature to eat animals"; the first to intro-

<sup>38</sup> These resemblances, which we can only briefly note here, are set forth in greater detail by C. Schmidt, *op. cit.*, pp. 252-292.

<sup>39</sup> *Hom.*, xi, 28, 30. Cf. *Recognitions*, vi, 10, 11: "Primo ut observet unusquisque ne menstruatae mulieri misceatur, hoc enim execrabile duxit lex Dei." The *Didascalia* knows of these scruples; it mentions them in ch. xxvi, and usually it sets them on one side. But we read in the Latin translation, p. 255, 4: "Cum naturalia profluunt uxoribus vestris (nolite convenire illis) sed sustinete eas . . ." (the words in brackets have no counterpart in the Syriac). A little earlier (pp. 244-245), on the contrary, the author denounces these superstitious fears; he condemns women who think that during these seven days they have not the Holy Spirit; and also (pp. 242-243) the women who during these days abstain from all conjugal relations, do not receive the Eucharist, and do not pray.

<sup>40</sup> Same texts of the *Homilies* and the *Recognitions*; the *Didascalia* condemns these scruples: "Hæc igitur super omnes cogitate qui seminum cursus et adproximationes mulierum observant: nam quæ tales sunt observationes omnes stultæ et nocivæ sunt. Si enim cursum seminis quis passus et adproximans mulieri baptizetur, et stratum suum lavet; et erit illi fatigatio, numquam deficiens a baptismo et a lavatione rerum et a stratu suo; et nihil aliud poterit agere." Again (*ibid.*, p. 255): a man is not made unclean by his relations with his wife, but if the woman is not his wife, the sea itself would not suffice to wash away the stain. This text is compared with the statement of Theano, the Pythagorean, quoted by Clement, *Strom.*, IV, xix, 121, 3; she was asked how long a wife ought to wait, after sexual relations, before presenting herself at the temple. She replied: "If it was with her husband, she can go there at once; if it was with another man, never." The text of the *Didascalia* has been copied by the author of the *Apostolic Constitutions*, VI, xxix, 4.

<sup>41</sup> *Recogn.*, vi, 11: the principle is thus enunciated by Peter: "Bonum est et puritati conveniens etiam corpus aqua diluere." Similarly in *Hom.*, xi, 28: "Purify your soul from all evils by the heavenly understanding, and wash your body in the bath."

<sup>42</sup> *Hom.*, xii, 6; *Recog.*, vii, 6.



duce this usage were the giants who were born to the fallen angels.<sup>43</sup> To have a meal is called in the *Homilies* "taking salt."<sup>44</sup> The Eucharist itself is celebrated with bread and salt.<sup>45</sup> The *Didascalia* is aware of men who preach this abstinence, but it regards them as heretics, condemned by the decree of the apostles.<sup>46</sup>

### *The Law*

The conception of the Law and of prophecy is much more fundamental than the moral ideas we have just examined. We must consider it as it appears successively in the Clementine apocrypha and then in the *Didascalia*; the two groups of writings do not display the same inspiration, but they may usefully be compared together.<sup>47</sup>

The Law was given orally by Moses to the Seventy; it was not written until after his death; at the same time it was combined with additions which are erroneous and dangerous.<sup>48</sup> God allowed this contamination, in order that the Law might not suffice of itself;<sup>49</sup>

<sup>43</sup> *Hom.*, viii, 15.

<sup>44</sup> *Hom.*, iv, 6; vi, 26; xi, 34; xiii, 8, 11; xiv, 1, 8; xv, 11; xix, 25; xx, 16.

<sup>45</sup> *Hom.*, xiv, 1; *Contestatio*, iv; cf. *Letter of Clement*, ix.

<sup>46</sup> *Didascalia*, xxiii: "Alii iterum ex ipsis neque carnem sumere docebant, dicentes ea quæ animam habent non debere manducari"; xxvi, pp. 241-243: "Observate igitur vos ab omni heretico, qui legem non utuntur neque profetas, de Deo omnipotenti non credentes inimicantur, et abstinent se a cibis et prohibent nubere, et resurgere in carne nolunt, tanquam nolentes manducare et bibere, sed demones volunt resurgere spiritales in fantasmis."

<sup>47</sup> On the concept of the Law in the Clementine apocrypha, cf. Waitz, *op. cit.*, pp. 116 *et seq.*; Schmidt, *op. cit.*, pp. 266 *et seq.*

<sup>48</sup> *Hom.*, iii, 47: "The Law of God was orally given by Moses to the seventy wise men charged with its transmission so that it might be the rule of life of those who would come after them. After the Assumption of Moses, it was written by someone, but not by Moses. . . . Later, in the time which followed Moses, after 500 or more years, it was deposited in the Temple which was then built. It remained there another 500 years, but was then destroyed by fire under Nabuchodonosor. Being thus written after Moses, and several times destroyed, it shows the prescience of Moses who, foreseeing its destruction, did not write it; but those who wrote it, and in ignorance did not foresee its destruction, showed that they were not prophets."

<sup>49</sup> *Recognitiones*, i, 21: "Quæ tamen manifeste quidem dicta, non tamen manifeste scripta sunt, in tantum ut cum leguntur, intelligi sine expositore non possint propter peccatum quod coadolevit hominibus." *Hom.*, ii, 38: "The Scriptures have been combined with many falsehoods, which came about thus: the prophet Moses, by the will of God, had given the Law and the solutions to seventy men chosen by him that they might be the guides of the people; shortly afterwards the Law, written down, was mingled with lying additions against the one God who made heaven and earth and all that they contain, the Evil One

and that no one should be able to understand it properly unless he were a "prudent changer."<sup>50</sup> It is therefore a dangerous presumption to think a mere reading of the Law enables us to understand it; we also need the traditional interpretation which the oral tradition of the Jews has preserved.<sup>51</sup>

The thesis developed in these works resembles in more than one feature that which the gnostic Ptolomy set forth in his *Letter to Flora*. This also found in the written Law different sources of unequal value: God, Moses, and the elders. Even the first source is not entirely pure: in the precepts laid down by God there are some things which are good without any mixture of evil, and it was of these the Saviour said: "I am come, not to destroy but to fulfil." But there are also some precepts consisting of good and evil mingled, and these the Saviour has abolished. Lastly there are some purely symbolical precepts, and the God who inspired this imperfect legislation is the Demiurge.<sup>52</sup> Consequently we are free in regard to this legislation.

In contrast to this mythological conception, Irenæus had given a true and profound interpretation of the Law: it constituted an education which was severe in character, but also beneficial.<sup>53</sup>

The *Didascalia* in turn offers an interpretation of the problem:<sup>54</sup> at the beginning God gave to his people a Law which was good and holy; but when they fell into idolatry, the Jews received from God a second Law, *Deuterosis*, which was hard and intolerable. The Lord Jesus confirmed the first but abolished the second:

The second Law was imposed because of the worship of the golden calf and idolatry. But by baptism you have been delivered from idolatry,

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having had the audacity to do this by a just judgment. And this came about with reason and judgment, in order that we might be able to distinguish those who dare to listen willingly to what is written against God, from those who, through love of him, not only do not believe these blasphemies, but do not wish even to listen to them."

<sup>50</sup> *Hom.*, xviii, 20: "Every man who wants to be saved must, as the Master has said, be a judge discerning the written books. For the Master said: 'Be ye good changers.' There must be changers, for the evil money is mixed with the good." Cf. *ibid.*, iii, 50.

<sup>51</sup> *Hom.*, iii, 51: "By referring us to the scribes and doctors for the understanding of the Scriptures (Jesus) has shown that these truly knew what really was the Law."

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Harnack, *Der Brief des Ptolemäus an die Flora*, pp. 16-18.

<sup>53</sup> *Adv. hæreses*, IV, xxiv-xxix; cf. Connolly, *op. cit.*, pp. lxiii *et seq.* Epiphanius follows Irenæus in his refutation of Ptolomy (*Hær.*, XXXIII, xi).

<sup>54</sup> Especially in the last ch., xxvi. Cf. Connolly, *op. cit.*, pp. lviii-lxix.

and you have been set free from the second Law, which was imposed because of idols. For in the Gospel the Lord has renewed and fulfilled and confirmed the Law, but he has abolished the second Law. He came in order to confirm the Law and abolish the second Law, and to perfect the power of human liberty, and to manifest the resurrection of the dead. . . . He made no use of sprinklings, ablutions or other rites; he offered no sacrifices or holocausts, or any of those things which had to be offered according to the second Law. And in this way he signified the abolition of the second Law, delivered you from it, and called you to liberty, saying: "Come to me, all ye that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you."<sup>55</sup>

Anyone who still keeps to-day the ritual practices prescribed by the second Law is behaving as an idolator and is subjecting himself to "the bonds of a blind man"; the true Christians shake themselves free from it, and apply to themselves the words of David: "Dirumpamus vincula ipsorum et proiciamus a nobis jugum ipsorum."<sup>56</sup>

If, however, we ask which are the parts of the Pentateuch which belong to the Law, the answer is not clear, "nor do I imagine that the author himself could readily have supplied it. Large portions of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy ought logically to be excluded from 'the Law.' But Law and *Deuterosis* were interwoven, it would seem, in all the books."<sup>57</sup> To distinguish between these two sources there is needed a very sure intuition; this is a gift supremely necessary to a bishop:

Before all a bishop should know well how to distinguish between the Law and the second Law, and distinguish what the Law prescribes to the faithful from the shackles imposed upon the unbelievers, lest any one of his Christians mistake the shackles for the Law, weigh himself down with intolerable burdens, and become a son of perdition.<sup>58</sup>

This attitude, as we see, is quite different from that of the *Homilies*: the effort of the preacher is to recommend the exact observance of the ritual laws, while the preoccupation of the *Didascalia* is to dissuade from it. The answers are contradictory, but the problem is the same: the Christians who read these books regard

<sup>55</sup> Ch. xxvi.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Connolly, *op. cit.*, p. lxviii.

<sup>58</sup> Ch. iv.

the question of the Jewish rites, not as an historical problem, but as an urgent case of conscience.<sup>59</sup>

### *The Office of Jesus According to the Clementines*

If we try to see what, in the Clementine writings, is the function of the Law in respect of the Gospel, we find that the author does not realise the religious transformation which has been brought about in the world by the coming of Christ: if mankind had willed to conform itself to the light of reason, they would not have needed either Moses or Jesus, and it is not by believing in masters and calling them Lord that one is saved:

That is why Jesus was hidden from the Jews who took Moses for their master, and Moses is hidden from those who believe in Jesus. For, as it is the same doctrine which is taught by both, God accepts the believer in either. . . . The Jews, then, are not condemned for not knowing Jesus, since God hides him from them, provided they accomplish what Moses commands them, and do not hate him whom they know not; and the believers who come from the Gentiles are not condemned for not knowing Moses, since God veils him from them, provided they accomplish what Jesus commands them and do not hate the one whom they know not.<sup>60</sup>

We see from this how far the redactor can go in his veneration for the Law: between Moses and Jesus he sees no difference; that a man is a disciple of one rather than the other is of little importance, provided he puts into practice what is taught, and does not hate the other master whom he knows not. This is, however, an extreme position: in the book as a whole the preaching of Christianity, and in particular of baptism, shows that the author wishes to be a Christian and to lead his readers to Christ.

Another feature in this passage is also to be noticed: the predominant and almost exclusive regard for practical morality. Hence

<sup>59</sup> In the next century we find the same problem in Aphraates, *Hom.*, xv, *On the distinction between foods*. The solution he gives is that of the *Didascalia*: there are two categories of precepts, one kind of which Ezechiel says: "I gave them my statutes, which if a man do he shall live" (xx, 11), and another kind: "I gave them statutes that were not good, and judgments in which they shall not live" (xx, 25, 26). It was in order to deliver us from the second kind that the Lord said: "Come to me, you who labour. . . ." (Aphraates, *Patrologia Syriaca*, Vol. I, pp. 753-758).

<sup>60</sup> *Hom.*, viii, 5-7.

the surprising statement that if men had faithfully followed the light of reason, they would have needed neither Moses nor Jesus. And certainly in the Clementine preaching the whole stress is on the practical activity of the will, and this again is very Jewish; the doctrinal discussions have for the most part a negative character: they refute polytheism, idolatry, and astrological fatalism, but on Christian doctrine itself they throw very little light.

### *The True Prophet*

The only important thesis set forth by the author is the theory of the True Prophet.<sup>61</sup>

The preaching of Peter at Sidon is thus summarised: "We must adore God only, believe in the one Prophet of the truth, and be baptized for the remission of sins"; in addition we must strictly observe the ritual laws.<sup>62</sup>

As we see, faith is here reduced to these two articles: belief in God and in his Prophet. Who is this Prophet? For us Christians, he is Jesus. For the Jews, as has been said, he is Moses. We can go still farther back: from the origin of the human race there was a true Prophet: Adam. The story of Adam's Fall is a perversion of Scripture, and must be rejected.<sup>63</sup> Adam was "a true Prophet and knew

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Cerfaux, *Le vrai Prophète des Clementines*, in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XVIII, 1928, pp. 143-163. I leave on one side another theory to which the author attaches a still greater importance, that of couples (cf. Schmidt, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-31; *ibid.*, pp. 152-155). God has separated and put in opposition all beings, "heaven and earth, day and night, light and fire, sun and moon, life and death"; in these opposing terms the less good precedes and the better follows: "The world and eternity: the present world is temporary, the future world is eternal. First ignorance, then knowledge. That is how the heads of the prophecy have been divided. As the present world is female, like a mother she gives birth to souls; the future world is male, and receives its children like a father; that is why the prophets who are in this world, being the sons of men, have a knowledge of the future world. If religious men had known this mystery they would never have strayed, and now also they would recognise that Simon, who disturbs all men, is the author of errors and of lies" (*Hom.*, ii, 15). For Simon came before Peter; hence Peter is good, and Simon bad; similarly John the Baptist is only one of the children of women; but Jesus who came after him is the Son of Man. Cf. *ibid.*, ii, 15-18; ii, 33; iii, 16, 22-28; *Recogn.*, iii, 61.

<sup>62</sup> *Hom.*, vii, 8.

<sup>63</sup> *Hom.*, iii, 17 (Migne, P.G., Vol. II, 121): "I do not think that one can excuse anyone who thinks unworthy things of the Father of all, although he has been led to this by a corruption of the Scriptures, for whosoever wrongs an image, and that the image of an eternal king, sins against the King himself. . . ." xxi, 125: here the author recalls that Adam gave names to all the

all things"; he bequeathed this knowledge to his children, teaching them that they ought to serve God in all things; he thus "established for all men an eternal law."<sup>64</sup>

This shows how we are to understand what was said above concerning the natural law which might have sufficed for all. As mankind disregarded it, Moses and Jesus were sent to promulgate it afresh. The teaching given is the same: there is no progress from one to the other.

All this theory was like the theology of Irenæus, developed in order to refute the Marcionite heresy; but we can see the tremendous distance which separates the two doctrines. Each aims at establishing the divine origin and the holiness of the Old Testament against the negations of Marcion. But the Clementine apocrypha sees in the successive revelations of God only the repetition of one and the same message; Irenæus, on the contrary, recognises in them the stages of a progressive revelation which gradually uplifts man to God, the highest stage being marked by the Incarnation of the Word and the coming of the Holy Spirit. These great mysteries are overlooked in the Clementine books, and this constitutes their fundamental defect; Jesus is merely a messenger from God who repeats to man what Adam and Moses had told them previously; his divine sonship is neglected, and his redeeming action ignored.<sup>65</sup>

In this study, we have examined the religious doctrine which appears in the two Clementine works, the *Homilies* and *Recognitions*. It has introduced us to a Judeo-Christian community in the first half of the third century, but we must say at least a word about some elements conserved in these books which seem to be earlier, and to come from a more virulent Jewish Gnosticism. This is espe-

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animals: "What need had he then to eat fruit in order to know good and evil, seeing he had been forbidden to eat it? They have lost their discernment who believe this, and think that an animal without reason was more powerful than the God who created all things." With this text we may compare on the one hand Tatian's theory of the damnation of Adam (*apud* Irenæus, *Adversus Hæreses*, I, xxviii, 1; Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, IV, xxviii, 2-3), and on the other hand the reply of St. Irenæus to this error (*Adversus Hæreses*, III, xxiii, 8). But in the present case not only is Adam's salvation affirmed, but also his perpetual innocence, and this involves the hypothesis of the corruption of Scripture which is in fact held by that writer.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, viii, 10.

<sup>65</sup> In *Hom.*, xi, 20, we have a brief reference to the Master on the cross and his prayer: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." The author sees in this an example which the disciples of the Master should imitate, but nothing more.

cially the case with the solemn pledge set forth at the beginning. St. Peter writes to James:

I ask and beg you not to communicate to anyone the books of my preaching which I send to you, neither to one of our own race nor to a stranger, until you have proved him. But if after examination someone is found to be worthy, then transmit them to him as Moses did, transmitting his doctrine to the seventy who succeeded him in his chair.

In conformity with this desire, James exacts the following promise from those to whom he transmits the books:

I call to witness the heavens, the earth, and the waters, which contain all things that exist, and besides all these elements the air which penetrates all things and without which I cannot breathe, that I shall always be subject to him who gives me the books of preaching, and that I will not communicate to anyone in any way the books given to me, I will not transcribe them or give them in writing, I will not allow them to be copied, either by myself or by another, or by any other method, artifice or means; I will not treat them without care, placing them [before anyone], or making signs or communicating them in any way whatsoever. I will do this only if I find somebody worthy, as I have been judged to be myself, and then only after a still more searching test, lasting in any case six months at least; I will thereupon communicate them to this pious and good man destined for preaching, and I will do this only with the consent of my bishop.<sup>66</sup>

### *The Gnostic Secret*

We recognise here, more clearly than in any other text, the "secret" of the Gnostic tradition. In the rest of the book, Gnosticism is partially effaced by later additions, but nevertheless a tenacious Judeo-Christianity remains. Its persistence enables us the better to understand the reactions of the Christian Church at this time, particularly in Origen.

And already we realise what development the future may hold for this faith in God and his Prophet; to transform it into Mahometanism it will only require the prestige of a leader presenting himself as in fact *the* prophet, and who will transform this weak and apparently dying religion into a conquering sect.

<sup>66</sup> Migne, P.G., Vol. II, 28-29.

§ 2. MANICHÆISM<sup>1</sup>*How the History of Manichæism has been discovered*

Down to the first years of the twentieth century, the history of early Manichæism remained very obscure.<sup>2</sup> The writings of Mani and his disciples had been numerous and very widespread, but they had been forbidden and destroyed everywhere, by Catholics, Mahometans, Buddhists and Chinese officials.<sup>3</sup> Towards the end of the last century numerous fragments which had escaped destruction were discovered in Chinese Turkestan, where at one time Manichæism had been very strong. The Russians began a search, which was carried on by various German, English, French and Chinese missions.<sup>4</sup> These were very fruitful; and all the works published during the past thirty years on Manichæism and its history depend on the discoveries made by F. K. W. Müller, Von le Coq, Stein and Pelliot. These documents were certainly of value, but they were of comparatively late date and difficult to interpret.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bibliography.—The most important studies on Manichæism depend in great part on the documents discovered in Chinese Turkestan at the beginning of the twentieth century. We must mention especially: F. Cumont, *Recherches sur le Manichéisme*, fasc. 1 and 2, Brussels, 1908 and 1912; P. Alfarc, *Les Écritures manichéennes*, 2 vols., Paris, 1918; F. C. Burkitt, *The Religion of the Manichees*, Cambridge, 1925; G. Bardy, art. *Manichéisme*, in *Dict. de Théol. Cath.*, Vol. IX, cols. 1842-1895. The more recent and much more important discoveries which we mention in the text have thrown a new light on the history of Manichæism; pending the publication of these new texts (a first fascicule appeared in the summer of 1934 at Stuttgart, published by Kohlhammer), one will find a short inventory in the book of C. Schmidt, *Neue Originalquellen des Manichäismus aus Aegypten*, Stuttgart, 1933.

<sup>2</sup> Two centuries ago, Beausobre wrote in his *Histoire critique de Manichée et du Manichéisme*, Amsterdam, 1734, 2 vols., Vol. I, p. 217: "It is very difficult, not to say impossible, to give to-day an accurate and complete idea of the philosophical and theological system of Mani. To know with certainty the opinions of the heretics we should have to possess their confessions of faith, and books in which they themselves expound their opinions calmly and with precision. But we have at present no work by Mani himself, or of his first disciples—we have at most a few fragments conserved in the works of writers who refuted them and who, in accordance with the methods of controversialists, usually fastened on points they regarded as the least reasonable, and most capable of a bad sense."

<sup>3</sup> This history has been told by P. Alfarc, *Les Écritures manichéennes*, Vol. I, pp. 92-110.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Alfarc, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 129-138.

<sup>5</sup> Burkitt wrote: "Unfortunately the fragments consist almost entirely of small and often unintelligible scraps, and they are written either in the Soghdian language, i.e. a sort of Middle Persian intermediate between the old Persian of the inscriptions and the language used to-day, or else in a proto-Turkish" (*op.*



In the course of the year 1930, some fellahs discovered near to Medinet Mâdi in the Fayum a box containing works written on papyri, and these contained a Coptic translation of some writings by Mani himself or his early disciples.<sup>6</sup>

The Fayum papyri seem to have been transcribed between 350 and 400, i.e. only a century after the death of Mani in 272. Hence they give us some knowledge of Manichæism in its primitive period, which the Tourfan fragments did not enable us to reach. The study and printing of these texts has only just begun,<sup>7</sup> and several years will have to pass before we know their contents exactly.<sup>8</sup>

### *Mani*

We are, however, already able to establish some points which determine the general lines of the history of Mani, his preaching and his doctrine. He tells us that during the last years of the reign of Ardashir (224-241), he went on a vessel to the land of the Indians. There he "preached the hope of life, and chose there a good nucleus of disciples." When Sapor became king in 241, Mani, recalled by him, went "from the land of the Indians to the land of the Persians, and from the land of the Persians to the country of Babylon, Maisan and Chuzistan." "I appeared," he says, "before the king Sapor, who received me with much honour. He allowed me to travel in his kingdom, and to preach the word of life. I spent several years with him, following him to Persia, the land of the Parthians, and as far as Adiabene and the frontiers of the Roman Empire."<sup>9</sup>

This text shows that Mani sojourned in India and was active there at the beginning of his career. Historians had wondered whether Mani ever came into personal contact with Buddhism, and

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*cit.*, p. 15). The difficulty of the language is such that the scholars who have published these texts have had to warn the reader that their translation is "on many points hypothetical and provisional."

<sup>6</sup> The works of Mani were for the most part written in Syriac; one work not found in these papyri, the *Shapuraken*, was written in Persian.

<sup>7</sup> A first fascicule appeared in 1934: *Manichäische Handschriften der Sammlung A. Chester Beatty. I. Manichäische Homilien*, Stuttgart, Kohlhammer.

<sup>8</sup> The reader will find a provisional description of these books in the work of Schmidt mentioned above, and in our article, *Mani et son œuvre d'après les papyrus récemment découverts*, in *Etudes*, 20th Oct., 1933, pp. 129-143.

<sup>9</sup> This text occurs at the beginning of the *Kephalaia*; quoted by Schmidt, *op. cit.*

the majority answered the question in the negative.<sup>10</sup> Mani himself answers the question in a way we did not expect. This interesting piece of information is not the only one. The East and especially India exercised then a kind of fascination on men's minds. In 242, at the time when Mani, recalled by Sapor, was beginning his preaching in Persia under his protection, Plotinus was leaving Alexandria to join the army which Gordianus was leading against Sapor. He hoped, under cover of this expedition, to penetrate into Persia, perhaps even as far as India, and "to get some direct knowledge of the philosophy of the Persians and of the Indians."<sup>11</sup> As we know, the expedition ended in disaster; Plotinus escaped and returned only with great difficulty. Again, about this time there was written in Syriac, not far from the country of Mani, the *Acts of Thomas*, in which the preaching of the Apostle in India is set forth amidst a wealth of legends and Gnostic fancies. Himself more of an Oriental than Plotinus and the author of the *Acts of Thomas*, Mani, Persian born, set out to conquer India. Recalled to his own country, he remained there; he followed Sapor in his expeditions, and thus reached Adiabene on the borders of the Roman Empire, but he seems never to have crossed the frontier.

### *His Aim*

The goal he aimed at was to found a new religion, in which all others would be fused together:

The writings, wisdom, apocalypses, parables and psalms of all the previous religions, gathered from all parts, have come together in my religion, in the wisdom which I have revealed. As one river mixes with another and forms one great stream, so also the ancient books have been united to my writings and there has thus been formed one great

<sup>10</sup> The fragments discovered in Chinese Turkestan displayed a Buddhist influence, but this was explained by the fact that "Turkestan was a country which was half Buddhist, and wholly Buddhist countries were quite near." Burkitt, who gives this explanation (*op. cit.*, p. 98), adds: "In the original teaching of Mani, I see no sure trace of Buddhism as a formative element. Buddha is mentioned by Mani with respect, as he mentions Plato and Hermes Trismegistus. He knew very little, I believe, about these thinkers except their great names." Alfarc (*op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 211-219) allows that Mani was influenced by Buddha; he thinks it was not through personal contact in India that he knew Buddhism, but only through Gnosticism.

<sup>11</sup> Porphyry, *Life of Plotinus*, iii.

wisdom, to which nought can be compared that has been preached to any previous generation. No one has ever written, no one has ever revealed books like those which I have written.<sup>12</sup>

We recognise here that mirage of Syncretism which at that time deceived so many minds; Rome had witnessed its triumph a few years before Mani preached, in the reign of Alexander Severus (222-235). This Syncretism, which then invaded the Roman Empire, arose in Syria, and was imported from there by the Severi. When we recall this circumstance we are the less surprised by the foolish and ambitious dreams of Mani. He recognises three predecessors, who were merely forerunners of himself: Jesus, Zoroaster, and Buddha. These are his three brothers, interpreters of one and the same wisdom.<sup>13</sup> All three preached, but they did not write: in this respect also, says Mani, his religion is superior to theirs:

Not one of the apostles, my brethren, who were before me, wrote their wisdom, as I have written mine; they did not represent it by pictures as I have done. My religion, from the first, surpasses the previous religions.<sup>14</sup>

Finally, Manichæism is to spread everywhere and thus it will be greater than any other religion:

One established his religion in the West, and his religion did not spread to the East; another established his religion in the East and gained nothing in the West; this is the case with all those whose names are unknown in other cities. The hope that I preach will gain the West, it will also win the East, and it will be heard in all languages and be preached in all cities. My religion is in this respect superior to all the preceding religions, for all those were established in some places and in some towns only. My religion will spread throughout all towns, and its message will reach all countries.<sup>15</sup>

### *Spread of Manichæism*

This confident assurance is evidently based on the successful beginnings of Manichæism, and is a foreshadowing of the widespread ramifications of the sect, which will penetrate the East as far as

<sup>12</sup> *Kephalaia*, cliv. Cf. Schmidt, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

<sup>13</sup> *Kephalaia*, *Introduction*.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, cliv; Schmidt, *op. cit.*, p. 17. Cf. *Introduction* quoted *ibid.*, p. 18-19.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

China and the West as far as Africa, attracting the young Augustine because of its brilliance, and will still be strong enough to threaten Christianity in the time of St. Louis. We also see what are the weapons it chooses by preference: writing and painting. The spoken voice ceases but a book remains; and the book will win its readers not only by the message it contains but also by the beauty of its characters and often by the artistic richness of its illumination. All Manichæan manuscripts are distinguished in this respect, the Fayum papyri as well as the books of the Gobi.<sup>16</sup>

### *Mani and Christianity*

Lastly, we notice the place found by Mani for Jesus: at first sight Jesus is not distinguished from Zoroaster or from Buddha: all three are Mani's "brothers," all three have preached the same wisdom. Nevertheless the very order in which Mani presents them is an indication of the difference in rank he assigns to each: Jesus, Zoroaster, Buddha. And this first indication is confirmed by several others which are still more significant: in one of the books we find a whole collection of hymns to Jesus; in the letters we find Mani giving himself this title: "Mani, apostle of Jesus Christ"; and this title is thus justified by Mani in his conversations with his disciples:

After the Church of the flesh was raised to the heights, then was inaugurated my own apostolate, concerning which you have questioned me. Since then, the Paraclete has been sent, the Spirit of truth, who has come to you in this last generation, in conformity with what Jesus said: "In the hour when I leave you, I will send the Paraclete, and when the Paraclete cometh he will teach the world, and will speak to you of justice."<sup>17</sup>

Then Mani says that during the reign of King Ardashir, "the living Paraclete" descended upon him, conversed with him, and revealed to him hidden mysteries. He enumerates all these mysteries, and then concludes:

Thus the Paraclete has revealed to me all that has happened and all that will happen, all that the eye sees, all that the ear hears, all that

<sup>16</sup> The papyri are not illustrated, but the calligraphy is admirable (cf. Schmidt, *op. cit.*, p. 18). On the illuminations in the Gobi MSS., cf. Burkitt, *op. cit.*, pp. v-vi.

<sup>17</sup> Quoted by Schmidt, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

the mind understands. Through him I have learnt to know all things; through him I have seen all; I have become one single body and one single spirit.

All this resembles very closely the claims of Montanus. Some seventy years before Mani, the Phrygian prophet had also applied to himself the promises of Jesus to his disciples; the Montanists, according to Eusebius, "dared to boast of Montanus as the Paraclete."<sup>18</sup> Certainly Mani did not possess the characteristics of an ecstatic; he had "a clear head and a cool reflective mind";<sup>19</sup> in the very chapter in which he sets forth the revelations he claims to have received from the "living Paraclete," we feel no breath of life: it reads like a catalogue. But though we do not find in Mani the ecstatic tremors of Montanus and his prophetesses, we find the same affirmation of identity with the Paraclete: "I have become (with him) one single body and one single spirit."

By reason of these pretensions, Mani like Montanus closely links himself with Christianity. The revelation he brings was that promised by Jesus; the Paraclete who speaks through him and is identified with him is the Spirit sent by Jesus. This gives a final answer to the question often discussed: Manichæism is not, as was long thought, a religion originating from paganism; it is a heresy which grew on the Christian stem like a parasitical Gnosticism. In a work which we have mentioned more than once, Professor Burkitt had the merit of enunciating clearly this thesis, as against the tendencies then prevalent. The Fayum papyri have given a decisive confirmation of it.

### *The Gnosticism of Mani*

But, while Mani aimed at absorbing Christianity and surpassing it, he also wished to enrich it with all that could make it a living and popular religion: thus he would combine with it the religion of Zoroaster, which he had found around him in the Iranian world, and the religion of Buddha which he had seen flourishing in the Indies. He dreamt of winning the whole world to his doctrines, and did his best to utilise all the existing religious forces, and doubtless this adaptability facilitated his first foundations. But this advantage

<sup>18</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, V, xiv; cf. *supra*, Bk. III, p. 657.

<sup>19</sup> Schmidt, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

was dearly bought: Manichæism was in this way burdened with a whole mythology and had to bear both its weight and its shame.<sup>20</sup>

From this standpoint, Manichæism resembles the Gnostic systems which preceded it: its mythological cosmology recalls those of Buddha and Valentine. Mani does not seem to have had a sufficiently fertile imagination to have invented these symbols himself; he found them in the Iranian religion, and borrowed them from there, just as his predecessors had been influenced by the cosmologies of Egypt.

But of all the Gnostics, the one Mani followed most closely was Marcion. This had long been known; the texts we now have under our eyes furnish a new proof of it. The second chapter of the *Kephalaia*, entitled *The Parable of the Tree*, begins thus:

We beg thee, O Lord, reveal to us and teach us what is meant by the two trees concerning which Jesus said to his disciples: "The good tree bringeth forth good fruits; the evil tree bringeth forth evil fruits. A good tree doth not bring forth evil fruit, nor an evil tree good fruit."

We recognise here the Gospel text which provided a starting point for the polemics of Marcion.<sup>21</sup> But for the timid dualism of his predecessor Mani substituted the radical opposition between two contrary principles, the good deity and the evil deity. That was the end to which Marcion was driven, in spite of himself, by the logic of the system;<sup>22</sup> Mani does not hesitate, and assimilating the Iranian mythology, he takes as the subject of his speculations and as the rule

<sup>20</sup> It will suffice if we recall here as an example the myth of the "seduction of the archontes," studied by F. Cumont, *Recherches sur le Manichéisme*, fasc. I, Brussels, 1908, pp. 54-68. Here is the conclusion of this study (p. 66): "Mani thus adopted an ancient myth of a shameless naturalism, as it was taught by the magi of the Sassanid Empire, but by a bold interpretation he tried to make it an episode in the struggle between the two eternal principles. The 'vital substance' became for him the light held captive by the Prince of Darkness. This chapter of the Manichæan cosmogony could thus seem to Orientals to be, as it were, the revelation of a truth long suspected. But beneath the veil of the symbol, the obscenity of the primitive legend is still visible, and its grossness would shock both the conscience and the taste of the Latins. The same was the case with many other Manichæan fables." A little earlier (p. 53), M. Cumont recalls that "it was above all these interminable fables concerning the sky, the stars, the sun and the moon," these innumerable stories of the making of the world, "full of a sacrilegious folly," which sickened St. Augustine with the sect into which he had strayed. Cf. Augustine, *Conf.*, V, vii, 1; V, iii, 6; *Contra Faustum*, xx, 9.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.*, i, 2; Harnack, *Marcion*, p. 85.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Bk. III, p. 651.

of his asceticism the eternal struggle between the good and evil principles.

Even more than by his theology, Mani resembles Marcion by his propaganda, and by the organisation of his church. Neither had the temperament of a metaphysician, but both were successful organisers. Unwearying founders of churches, they wanted to institute these everywhere, Marcion in the whole of the Roman Empire, and Mani, still more ambitious, in the whole world, and they linked their several churches closely together. But in this respect also Mani improved on the work of his predecessor; he himself supervised the government of all his communities; he chose as assistants a group of disciples recalling the Apostolic college; among these he designated a successor to himself, Sisinnios, who would assure after his death the continuity and unity of the sect. In 272 Mani was crucified by King Bahram and Sisinnios seized the reigns of power. He was slain in his turn, but Manichæism survived him.

### *The Later History of Manichæism*

Thanks to its strong organisation, Manichæism did not, like the heresies of Valentine and Marcion, split up almost immediately into rival sects. It spread throughout the world with great rapidity, and it absorbed Marcionism, first in the West and then in the East. It accentuated its dualism, maintained its ideal of an austere life and, by a distinction between the elect and the listeners, made its asceticism more rigid without at the same time forfeiting the sympathies of the masses. Its metaphysics were very weak, and in more than one point offended both reason and the moral sense. Yet its ambitious claims and its strong cohesion gave it a powerful and tenacious attraction over the masses. This form of Gnosticism, the latest of all, was to be the most successful and the most enduring; though persecuted everywhere it was to continue during ten centuries throughout the whole of the old world, and in the thirteenth century it would still menace Christianity in Italy and France.

# THE CHURCH OF ALEXANDRIA AFTER ORIGEN

## § 1. ST. DIONYSIUS OF ALEXANDRIA<sup>1</sup>

### *Heraclas, Bishop of Alexandria*

HARDLY a year had passed since Origen's condemnation when Demetrius was succeeded by Heraclas.<sup>2</sup> He occupied the see of Alexandria for sixteen years (231-247). He had been at the Catechetical School, first as a pupil, then assistant, and finally successor to Origen. When he became a bishop, he continued the measures taken against Origen by Demetrius,<sup>3</sup> and thus he must have regarded his dismissal as opportune. If he did not support all the complaints which Demetrius had made against Origen, at least he regarded his old master of the Catechetical School as the subject of so much lively discussion that he could not be allowed to return to Alexandria without compromising the peace of the Church.

### *St. Dionysius: His Training*

We know nothing further about the episcopate of Heraclas. His successor, St. Dionysius (247-264), was one of the great bishops of the time. In 231 he had replaced Heraclas at the head of the Catechetical School; in 247 he succeeded him in the see of Alexandria.

Like his contemporary, St. Cyprian, he seems to have been a pro-

<sup>1</sup> Bibliography.—C. Lett Feltoe, *Letters and other Remains of Dionysius of Alexandria*, Cambridge, 1904; J. Burel, *Denys d' Alexandrie, sa vie, son temps, ses œuvres*, Paris, 1910. The works of Dionysius have come down to us only in fragments, but these are fairly large ones. They will be found especially in Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, books vi and vii, and in the *Præparatio Evangelica*, vii and xiv. The story of his controversy with Dionysius of Rome is known to us through the work of St. Athanasius, *De sententia Dionysii*, and St. Basil, *Epist.*, xli. To these we can add some exegetical fragments found in *catenæ*. All these have been diligently collected and interpreted by Feltoe, *op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 944.

<sup>3</sup> Origen (cf. *supra*, *ibid.*) tried to profit by the election of Heraclas to return to Alexandria; he was prevented. Subsequent legend embroidered the facts, and attributed to Heraclas the attitude of Demetrius. Cf. Duchesne, *Histoire ancienne de l'Eglise*, Vol. I, p. 475, n. 1.



fessor of rhetoric before his conversion. We find some indications of his early training in his style, which is elegant and pure for that period, and also in references to classical authors such as Homer, Hesiod, Thucydides, Aristotle and Democritus.<sup>4</sup> The pleasure he takes in these references bears witness to a Christianity less severe than that of Cyprian, and we have a more noteworthy trace of his breadth of view in this story, which he himself relates:

I myself lived in the doctrines and traditions of the heretics, and for some time soiled my soul with their impure inventions; but at least I have, as a result of my stay among them, the advantage of confounding them in myself, and of having a much greater distaste for them. A brother, who was a priest, turned me away from them; he was afraid that I might be fouled with the mire of their wickedness, for my soul might have been spoilt thereby. I knew that what he said was true, but a vision supervened which came from God and fortified me, and a voice made itself heard by me. It gave me an explicit order: "Take all that you find, for you are capable of setting to rights and examining each thing, and in your case this has been from the first the cause of your faith." I received this vision as agreeing with the apostolic word which says to the strongest: "Become prudent changers of money."<sup>5</sup>

Thus we find in Dionysius the custom of examining freely heretical books, as we found it in Origen. It was through this that he was led to the Faith; the heavenly vision approved and encouraged him. On the other hand, the priest's warning shows that the Church was aware of the danger of these readings, and Dionysius himself admits it; only the "strongest" may claim such freedom.

### *His Teaching*

Dionysius was doubtless some thirty years of age and was probably already a priest when in 231 he took the place of Heraclas in the Catechetical School. It was probably during his sixteen years of teaching that he wrote his work *On Nature*, in which he refuted the atomism of Epicurus,<sup>6</sup> and perhaps also his commentary on *Ecclesiastes*.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Feltoe, *op. cit.*, p. xxiv.

<sup>5</sup> *Letter to Philemon*, in Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VII, vii (cf. Feltoe, *op. cit.*, p. 52).

<sup>6</sup> Feltoe, *op. cit.*, pp. 127-164; cf. Burel, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-21.

<sup>7</sup> Feltoe, *op. cit.*, pp. 208-228.

*His Episcopate*

These peaceful years of study were succeeded by the years of his episcopate, which were full of terrible events. Philip the Arabian had been emperor since 244; the Church had found in him, if not a declared Christian, at least a friend. But in the course of the last year of his reign (end of 248), a violent disturbance broke out at Alexandria against the Christians. Dionysius, who had been bishop for a year, narrated these matters to Fabius of Antioch and to his church. He described the martyrdom of Metras, Quinta, Apollonia, and Serapion, and the uprising of the whole city: "There was no road or street or path which was open to us by day or night; all cried out everywhere and without ceasing: 'If anyone refuses to utter blasphemies, he must be brought out and burnt.'" The Christians fled, and suffered the loss of their goods. There were no apostates, unless perhaps just one.<sup>8</sup>

The revolution which overthrew Philip was the occasion of a brief truce. But very soon, in October 249, the Edict of Decius was proclaimed. This was no longer an explosion of popular passion but the effort of the Roman Empire as a whole to crush the Church. At Alexandria there were many defections, especially among the "best known" Christians;<sup>9</sup> but there were also many martyrs. In his letters to Fabius of Antioch and to Domitius and Didymus,<sup>10</sup> Dionysius narrates these trials, and at the same time describes the state of his persecuted church:

In the city, some priests have hid themselves and secretly visit the brethren; these are Maximus, Dioscorus, Demetrius and Lucius. For those who were best known in the city, Faustinus and Aquila, wander about in Egypt. As for the deacons who have survived those who have died in the epidemic,<sup>11</sup> they are Faustus, Eusebius and Cheremon. It was this Eusebius whom God fortified from the beginning and prepared, so that he might carry out with courage his work among the confessors in prison and fulfil the mission, not without danger, of burying the bodies of the perfect and blessed martyrs.<sup>12</sup> For even to-day

<sup>8</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xli; xlii; xliv. Cf. Feltoe, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-21.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, xli, 11-13. Cf. Bk. III, p. 795.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, VII, xi, 20-25; the persecution here described is that of Decius and not that of Valerian; cf. Feltoe, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

<sup>11</sup> The epidemic in question was probably that which devastated Africa under Gallus and Volusianus in 252; cf. Feltoe, *op. cit.*, p. 68, n. 1. Rufinus, in place of *νόςω* read *νήσω* and translated "in insula."

<sup>12</sup> As Eusebius notes (*ibid.*, 26) this other Eusebius became in 269 Bishop of Laodicea in Syria; Maximus was to succeed Dionysius. The history of the Decian

the governor does not fail, when any are taken before him, either to put them to a cruel death, or else to rend them by torturing them, or to make them languish in prison in chains; he forbids all access to them, and watches strictly that no one appears there. Nevertheless God provides a little solace to the persecuted ones, thanks to the courage and constancy of the brethren.<sup>13</sup>

### *The Decian Persecution*

In this severity on the part of magistrates and the lengthy detentions, we recognise the Decian persecution, which raged also at Carthage and Rome. In spite of the numerous defections, there seems to have been a firmer resistance in this already ancient church of Alexandria than there was at Carthage. The community was similarly organised under the direction of priests and deacons, and the part played by the bishop was also similar. We have on this subject some valuable details in the correspondence of Dionysius, especially in his letter to Bishop Germanus, who had criticised his conduct: <sup>14</sup> during three days the Bishop of Alexandria had remained in his house, while sought for everywhere else; "it was not without difficulty that on the fourth day, as God commanded me to set forth and opened the way to me in a miraculous manner, we went out together, I, my servants,<sup>15</sup> and many brethren."

In the evening, he was captured and taken to Taposiris; a wedding party learnt of this and rushed there; the soldiers took flight, and Dionysius was delivered against his will. He remained concealed in Libya, with two other brethren;<sup>16</sup> from there he wrote to Domitius and Didymus; the information he gives concerning his church and clergy show that, like Cyprian, he continued to govern them during his exile.<sup>17</sup>

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persecution at Alexandria and in Egypt is clarified by numerous *libelli* contained in the papyri; a number have been published by C. Wessely in *Patrologia Orientalis*, IV, 112 *et seq.*; XVIII, 354 *et seq.* Cf. Bk. III, p. 792, n. 2.

<sup>13</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xi, 24-25.

<sup>14</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xi, 2-19; Feltoe, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-36. The first part of this letter concerns the Decian persecution, the latter that of Valerian.

<sup>15</sup> The meaning of the word *παῖδες* is controverted; some see here the disciples of Dionysius, still at this date head of the Catechetical School; Feltoe (*op. cit.*, p. xiv) thinks that Dionysius was a widower and that he is speaking of his own children; others again translate as we have done.

<sup>16</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xi, 23.

<sup>17</sup> The memory of the exile of St. Dionysius remained fresh in his church. St. Peter of Alexandria recalled it in a fragment of his *Mystagogus* quoted by Routh, *Reliquiæ sacræ*, Vol. IV, p. 81; cf. Feltoe, *op. cit.*, p. xvii, n. 2.

In the course of the summer of 251, Decius was killed in the Dobrudja, where he was waging war against the Goths. Gallus, who continued the persecution of the Church, perished in his turn in May 253, and Aemilian, his successor, died three months later in August. The succession of Valerian and his son Gallienus was looked upon by the Christians as a deliverance; Dionysius refers to these hopes, which were to be so decisively destroyed by a new persecution.<sup>18</sup> But at least for four years (253-257) the Church enjoyed peace. The Bishop of Alexandria profited by it to calm the conflicts which had arisen through the persecution. In the two grave matters of the reconciliation of apostates and the baptism of heretics, he adopted the same line as the Bishop of Rome, with the moderation which characterised his conduct in all things.

### *The Reconciliation of Apostates*

The collapses had been numerous. As soon as peace was re-established, the confessors intervened on behalf of the apostates, but their intervention was more discreet than that of the confessors of Carthage, and it did not lead to any objection on the part of the bishop.<sup>19</sup> Dionysius himself became their advocate, in a most moderate and at the same time most persuasive manner, in a letter to Fabius of Antioch who, according to Eusebius,<sup>20</sup> "was somewhat inclined to favour the schism" (of Novatian):

These divine martyrs who were among us, and who are now seated with Christ, share his royalty, judge with him, and pronounce sentence with him, have taken under their protection some of our fallen brethren, guilty of having offered sacrifice. These martyrs have seen their conversion and their penitence; they have decided that it could be accepted by him who wills not the death of the sinner but rather his repentance; they have received them, gathered them together, reunited them, and have shared with them their prayers and their meals. What do you advise, brethren, in this matter? What ought we to do? Shall we agree

<sup>18</sup> In his letter to Hermammon (*Hist. eccles.*, VII, x; Feltoe, *op. cit.*, pp. 70 *et seq.*): "It must be noted that his prosperity lasted as long as he himself was gentle and kind towards God's people; for none of the emperors who preceded him displayed so much benevolence and favour towards them; even those who were openly said to be Christians did not receive them with such manifest favour as he did at the beginning of his reign; all his household was full of pious men; it was a church of God."

<sup>19</sup> Cf. D'Alès, *L'Edit de Calliste*, pp. 345-349; Feltoe, *op. cit.*, pp. 59-64.

<sup>20</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xlv, 1.

with the martyrs? Shall we respect their judgment and the pardon they have granted? With regard to those who have obtained mercy, shall we ourselves act with goodness, or shall we hold that the decision taken by the martyrs is unjust, and present ourselves as censors of their judgment? Shall we lament their goodness, and upset the order they have established?<sup>21</sup>

To add point to this consultation, Dionysius relates the story of the aged Serapion, in which God himself intervened in order to reconcile a dying apostate.<sup>22</sup>

### *Dionysius and Novatian*

These facts are sufficient to enable us to foresee the attitude of Dionysius in regard to Novatian. He explains this still more clearly in another letter: "[If we listen to Novatian], we shall do the contrary of what was done by Christ. He was good, he went out to the mountains to seek for the lost sheep; if the sheep fled away, he called it; if he found it, he brought it back with difficulty on his shoulders. We see the sheep coming, and harshly repel it with kicks."<sup>23</sup>

At Antioch, rigorism was regarded with a certain sympathy by Fabius. We have seen that Dionysius, by means of a consultation, tried to bring him back to a more lenient practice. He had to intervene on the spot, being called to Antioch by Helenus of Tarsus and his colleagues, to take part in a council.<sup>24</sup> Shortly afterwards he had the joy of writing thus to Pope Stephen: "Know that all these churches of the East and of the more distant countries, which were

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, xlii, 5; Feltoe, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

<sup>22</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xlii, 2-6; Feltoe, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-21. As Dionysius says here, he had ordered that "the dying, if they request it, and especially if they asked for it beforehand, should be absolved, so that they might die in hope." But the case might arise of the restoration to health of these dying persons. In a fragment published by Pitra (Feltoe, *op. cit.*, pp. 59-62) and which seems to belong to the letter to Conon mentioned by Eusebius (*Hist. eccles.*, VI, xlvi, 2), Dionysius decides the case in the sense of leniency: the divine absolution is definitive, and it would be "very absurd to charge him anew with his sins"; "but if after his recovery someone seems to need to be converted more fully, we advise him to humiliate himself of his own free will, to mortify himself, and to constrain himself; if he obeys, he will profit thereby; if he disobeys and resists, then this will be a sufficient ground for a new excommunication." A similar solution will be found in St. Cyprian, *Ad Antonianum Epist.*, lv, 13; cf. D'Alès, *Edit de Calliste*, p. 330 and n. 3.

<sup>23</sup> Fragment quoted by Mai from a Vatican MS. (Feltoe, *op. cit.*, p. 62).

<sup>24</sup> Letter to Cornelius, in Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xlvi, 3.

formerly divided, are now united; all their heads are unanimous, and greatly rejoice at the peace which is established, contrary to what was expected.”<sup>25</sup>

### *The Baptismal Controversy*

Out of the Novatian Schism arose the Baptismal Controversy. The history of St. Cyprian has brought out the close connection between the two controversies.<sup>26</sup> In this conflict Dionysius again, showed himself anxious for the unity of the Church and for peace. The tradition of his church was more in agreement with that of Rome than with that of Carthage and Cappadocia, but he tried to persuade Pope Stephen to be more tolerant.<sup>27</sup> When St. Sixtus succeeded St. Stephen St. Dionysius returned to this matter, which had caused such great danger to unity. Since his letter to Stephen he had received more precise information; he had learnt that “on this point certain decisions existed, which had been taken by large meetings of bishops; these had decided that those converted from heresies who had previously been catechumens, should thereupon be baptised and washed anew from the stain of the old and impure leaven.” Yet Stephen had threatened to excommunicate “Helenus and Firmilian, as well as all those of Cilicia and Cappadocia, and those of Galatia and of all the surrounding countries.”<sup>28</sup>

When Dionysius was writing this to Sixtus, the threat had already

<sup>25</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VII, v, 1. This refers, not as Eusebius thinks, to a cessation of persecution, but to the re-establishment of concord (cf. Feltoe, *op. cit.*, p. 41). We have already mentioned (Bk. III, p. 857, n. 41) the representations made by Dionysius to Novatian himself, his failure, and the judgment he passed on the whole affair in his letter to Dionysius, then a priest and soon to become Bishop of Rome.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Bk. III, p. 860.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Feltoe, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-59; D'Alès, art. *Baptême des hérétiques*, in *Dict. apol.*, Vol. I, col. 408. St. Jerome wrongly says in his account (*De viris illustribus*, lxi): “Hic in Cypriani et Africanæ synodi dogma consentiens de hæreticis rebaptizandis plurimas ad diversos misit epistolas.” Of the letter from Dionysius to Stephen written in 254, Eusebius (*Hist. eccles.*, VII, v, 1-2) quotes only a fragment concerning the peace restored to the Churches of the East (cf. *supra*, p. 1022). Another fragment has been conserved in Syriac and published, first by Pitra and then by Feltoe, *op. cit.*, pp. 45-47.

<sup>28</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VII, v, 3-6; Feltoe, *op. cit.*, pp. 49-50. As Feltoe rightly points out, this phrase shows that Stephen *threatened* to excommunicate these churches, not that he did *in fact* excommunicate them. On the Eastern councils, cf. the letter from Firmilian to Cyprian, *Epist.*, lxxv, 7 and 19, and the letter from Dionysius to Philemon, in Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VII, vii, 5.

passed away. In this matter the Bishop of Alexandria had done all in his power to prevent the threatened rupture; he had done his best to dissuade the Bishop of Rome from taking extreme measures; but while he was very tolerant towards the contrary tradition, he himself adhered to the Roman custom, and this was perhaps still more marked in the judgment he himself passes on baptism conferred by heretics.<sup>29</sup> We see in all this the great condescension of Dionysius, and his spirit of conciliation and peace.

### *The Valerian Persecution*

The letters we have just mentioned were written in exile; the imperial favour had lasted only three or four years. The good dispositions of Valerian were upset under the influence of Macrienus the Magus; in 257 a first edict exiled the heads of the churches. Dionysius has himself told us of his appearance before Aemilian, the prefect of Egypt, transcribing the very text of the interrogation from the official documents.<sup>30</sup> The magistrate appears as a politician who cannot understand the obstinacy of the Christians; he does not forbid their cult, but claims to impose upon them at the same time the cult of the gods of the emperor:

"I have spoken to you of the goodness which our masters use towards you: they pardon you if you will be converted to that which is in harmony with nature, and adore the saving gods of the Empire, and abandon all that is contrary to nature. What do you say to this? I expect you not to be ungrateful in view of the benevolence of our princes, since they exhort you to what is best." Dionysius replied: "All do not adore all the gods, but each person adores those whom he regards as such. We adore the one God who has created all beings, and who has placed the Empire in the hands of the most pious Augusti, Valerian and Gallienus; it is he whom we venerate and adore, and we pray to him constantly for their kingdom, that it may remain unshakable." Aemilian, exercising the office of governor, said: "Who then prevents you from adoring him, if he is God, together with the gods who are such by nature? For you are commanded to adore the gods, and the gods whom all know." Dionysius replied: "We do not adore any other god."

<sup>29</sup> If we are to believe St. Basil, *Epist.*, ii, 188, Dionysius would even seem to have allowed the validity of Montanist baptism. Cf. Bk. III, p. 860, n. 50.

<sup>30</sup> A bishop named Germanus had accused Dionysius of fleeing from the persecution; the details given above are derived from the defence put forward by Dionysius.

Aemilian, exercising the office of governor, said: "I see that you are all ungrateful and insensible towards the clemency of our Augusti; accordingly, you will not remain in this city, but you will be sent into the region of Libya to a place called Kephro, for I have chosen that place by order of our Augusti. It will be absolutely forbidden to you and all others, to hold meetings or to enter what are called cemeteries. If it is discovered that anyone is not to be found in the place which I have chosen for you, or is in a meeting, he will put himself in peril, and the fitting punishment will not fail. Withdraw yourselves, therefore, to the place ordained for you."<sup>31</sup>

When they arrived at Kephro, the martyrs were met with showers of stones thrown by the pagan population, but very soon some of these were converted. Thereupon the governor sent the Christians further into Libya, "assigning to each one as his residence a hamlet among those of the country. As for myself," adds Dionysius, "he started me off on the road, as the one who should first be dealt with. For he had obviously arranged and prepared things in such a way that, when he desired to take us, he would have us all within easy reach."

But matters went no further; for reasons which we do not know, the edict of 258, which led to Cyprian's martyrdom, did not affect Dionysius. Toward the end of 259 or the first months of 260, Valerian was taken prisoner by Sapor; his son Gallienus, possibly under the influence of his wife Salonina, published an edict of toleration.<sup>32</sup>

This marked the end of the persecution, but not the end of trials. Dionysius, returning to Alexandria, found the city divided into two camps, one holding for Gallienus, and the other for Macrienus and his sons: "It would be easier for a person, not only to go beyond the boundaries of the province, but even to go from East to West, than to arrive at Alexandria, starting from Alexandria itself. The vast and trackless desert in which Israel wandered for two generations was less wide and easier to traverse than the main street of the city." The harbour, filled with blood, reminded him of the Red Sea. "And then people are surprised, and ask whence come the pests, maladies and plagues of all kinds, and why the huge city no longer contains as many inhabitants, including children who cannot yet talk and

<sup>31</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xi, 7-11; Feltoe, *op. cit.*, pp. 31-32.

<sup>32</sup> This edict assured to Christians not only their personal security but also the use of places of worship. Cf. Bk. III, p. 806.



old people who are at the extreme limits of age, as it once contained of strong men alone.”<sup>33</sup> The plague had indeed broken out; its terrible ravages are described by Dionysius, as well as the charity of clergy and faithful, contrasting with the fear and selfishness of the pagans.<sup>34</sup>

### *Millenarianism*

In the course of his deportation to Libya, Dionysius was led to combat Millenarianism, and to discuss the authenticity of the *Apocalypse*.<sup>35</sup> Nepos, an Egyptian bishop,<sup>36</sup> had defended Millenarianism in a work entitled *Refutation of the Allegorists*; Dionysius answered him in two books *On the Promises*. He praised Nepos, his faith, his love for the Bible and his psalmody, but he protested that he himself loved truth more. The two bishops met at Arsinoe; the discussion lasted three days, characterised by wisdom, charity and peace; it resulted in the adhesion of Coracion, the leader of the Millenarians, to the doctrine maintained by Dionysius.

The fragments which remain to us of this work of Dionysius enable us to determine the position he defended on some important points. He mentioned the interpretation given by St. Irenæus and refuted it.<sup>37</sup> The main question concerned the *Apocalypse*. Dionysius discussed this in the course of his second book: “Some of those who have preceded us have completely rejected and repulsed this book; they have refuted it chapter by chapter, declaring that it is unintelligible and incoherent and carries a false title.”<sup>38</sup> . . . For my part, I would not be so bold as to reject this book, seeing that a

<sup>33</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxi, 3-9.

<sup>34</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxii.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, VII, xxiv-xxv.

<sup>36</sup> Probably Bishop of Arsinoe, where the discussion took place. Cf. *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxiv, 6.

<sup>37</sup> St. Jerome, *Præf. in libr. XVIII in Is.* Cf. Gry, *Le Millénarisme*, p. 101, n. 1.

<sup>38</sup> Gry notes (*op. cit.*, p. 101, n. 1): “Dionysius doubtless had in mind the priest Caius, but he speaks of many, and indeed of some who had preceded him; perhaps at Alexandria, under the influence of Origen, certainly under that of Greek philosophy, some had gone so far as to hold such radical views.” Since Gry wrote his work, there have appeared the *Scholia* of Origen on the *Apocalypse*, published by C. Diobouniotis and A. Harnack (1911). These *Scholia*, if they are accepted as authentic, establish Origen’s acceptance of the canonical character of the *Apocalypse*. Probably therefore the position of Origen on this matter was the same as that of Dionysius: he recognised the authority of the book, but rejected the Millenarian interpretation of it.

great number of brethren regard it with favour; I certainly find that its thought goes beyond my powers of conception, but I conjecture that there is in each passage a hidden and very admirable sense.”<sup>39</sup> But, while admitting the authority of this sacred book, Dionysius refused to regard it as a work of the apostle John. Comparing the *Apocalypse* to the fourth Gospel, he endeavoured to show that they cannot be from the same author, for they reveal two writers, differing in character, idea and expression, style and syntax. The points thus brought out are not really decisive, and it is possible to give them a different explanation from that advanced by Dionysius;<sup>40</sup> but at least we must recognise that the professor of the Catechetical School has here given us a critical study which calls for attention.<sup>41</sup>

### *The Controversy on the Trinity*<sup>42</sup>

Towards the end of his life, Dionysius had to intervene in a more serious controversy, and in this case his intervention was less fortunate. The Pentapolis district of Libya, the churches of which were attached to the church of Alexandria, was at that time threatened and even invaded by the Sabellian heresy.<sup>43</sup> Dionysius's long exile had prevented him from following the progress of this propaganda. But in 257 he realised the immediate danger, and wrote thus to Sixtus, Bishop of Rome:

On the matter of the doctrine now taught at Ptolemais in the Pentapolis, a wicked doctrine which contains a great blasphemy against the Father almighty, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, also great unbelief in respect of the one Son, the first born of all creation, the incarnate Word, and likewise ignorance concerning the Holy Spirit, I have received from the two sides documents and brethren who have

<sup>39</sup> Ed. Feltoe, pp. 114-116.

<sup>40</sup> A very careful discussion of the matter will be found in P. Allo, *Apocalypse*, pp. cxviii and excix-cxxii.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Feltoe, *op. cit.*, p. 108, and Westcott, *Hist. of N. T. Canon*, p. 362, n. 3, quoted by Feltoe, *ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Feltoe, *op. cit.*, pp. 165-198; Athanasius, *De sententia Dionysii; De synodis*, xliii; St. Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto*, xxix, lxxii; *Epist.*, i, 9. Recent historians of dogma have all dealt with, or at least mentioned, this controversy; see especially Tixeront, *Théologie anténicéenne*, pp. 408-413; Hamack, *Dogmengeschichte*, I, pp. 767-773; Bethune-Baker, *Early History of Christian Doctrine*, pp. 113-118; Hagemann, *Römische Kirche*, pp. 411-453.

<sup>43</sup> Sabellius was born in the Pentapolis; according to Athanasius (*De sent. Dion.*, v) his heresy was so widespread there in the time of Dionysius that some churches no longer dared to preach the Son of God.

discussed things with me; I have drawn up some letters as I was able, with God's help, in the form of a methodical exposition; I have sent you copies of these.<sup>44</sup>

These first efforts encountered resistance on the part of the heretics; Dionysius tried again.<sup>45</sup> New letters from him were read and discussed, not only in the Pentapolis but at Alexandria; several of those who read them considered that, in his anxiety to defend the distinction between the divine Persons, he had lost sight of the unity of their substance, and they denounced him to the Bishop of Rome.

The letter which formed the subject of the accusation had been written to Euphranor and Ammonius. The Alexandrians who sent it to Rome said that it contained grave errors. According to them, Dionysius separated the Son from the Father, denied his eternity and consubstantiality with the Father, and represented him as a creature and not the proper Son of God.<sup>46</sup>

### *The Synod of Rome and the Letter to the Pope*

At Rome the matter was regarded as sufficiently serious to warrant the calling of a Council. The bishops who took part "were indignant, and the Bishop of Rome set forth the opinion of all when

<sup>44</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VII, vi; Feltoe, *op. cit.*, pp. 51-52.

<sup>45</sup> Athanasius thus sets forth the succession of events: "Dionysius wrote to the authors of this heresy, advising them to abandon it; as they did not do so but became bolder in their impiety, he was compelled to reply to their impudence by the letter in question" (*De sententia Dionysii*, v). Eusebius (*Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxvi, 1) gives as the recipients of the letters Ammonius Bishop of Berenice, Telesphorus, Euphranor and Euporos, doubtless all four bishops. If we add to them Basilides, mentioned *ibid.*, VII, xxvi, 3, we are led to the conclusion that each of the cities of the Pentapolis had its own bishop at that time (cf. Duchesne, *Hist. anc. de l'Eglise*, Vol. I, p. 483).

<sup>46</sup> These complaints are set forth in Athanasius (*De sent. Dionysii*, iv-xviii); cf. Feltoe, *op. cit.*, pp. 166-167. We notice this text especially, which the Arians will later on exploit: "[The Son of God] is a creature, and has been made; he is not, by nature, the proper [Son of God], but he is other than the Father in essence; he is related to him in the same way that the vine is to the vinegrower, or the boat to the builder, for since he is a creature, he was not before he was made" (Athanasius, *ibid.*, iv). Athanasius admits the correctness of the citation, but he applies it to the Word as incarnate; this explanation is not confirmed by the text of Dionysius himself. As to those who had accused Dionysius, Athanasius reproaches, not their bad faith, but their precipitation: "they had a sound faith, but they did not question Dionysius to learn from him the sense of his letter" (*ibid.*, xiii).

writing to his namesake," Dionysius of Alexandria.<sup>47</sup> To bring the bishop to the right attitude, the Pope drew up two letters. One, which has not come down to us, was addressed personally to Dionysius, and invited him to explain himself; the other was addressed to the church of Alexandria; it did not name Dionysius, but it condemned his doctrine.

This document is the most important testimony we have concerning the ante-Nicene doctrine on the dogma of the Trinity.<sup>48</sup> According to the analysis of the Pope's letter given by St. Athanasius,<sup>49</sup> this portion was preceded by another, in which Dionysius of Rome condemned Sabellianism. Then it continued as follows:

Next I must address myself to those who divide, separate and suppress the most sacred dogma of the Church of God, the Monarchy, teaching three powers or separate hypostases, and three divinities. For I have learnt that some of those who are catechists and masters among you, and who are, so to speak, diametrically opposed to the opinion of Sabellius, are introducing this other opinion. His blasphemy consists in saying that the Son is the Father, and vice versa; but they preach that there are in a manner three Gods, dividing the holy unity into three hypostases foreign to each other and entirely separate. But it must needs be that the divine Word be united to the God of the universe, and the Holy Spirit must have in God his abode and habitation. And it is in every way necessary that the Holy Trinity be summed up and brought back to one alone as to its summit—in other words, to the Almighty God of the universe. For to cut up and divide the Monarchy into three principles is the teaching of the insensate Marcion; it is a diabolical doctrine, and not that of those who are truly disciples of Christ and who delight in the teachings of the Saviour. For these know well the Trinity preached by the divine Scripture, but [they know that] neither the Old nor the New Testament preaches three gods. We must similarly reprove those who say that the Son is a work, or that the Lord has been made, as if he were one of the things made, whereas the divine oracles attribute to him a generation peculiar to him and fitting for him, not a creation or production. It is therefore a blasphemy, and not an ordinary but a very great one, to say that the Lord is in some way the work of hands; for if he became Son, there was a time when he was not. But he always was, for he is in the Father, as he himself says, and the Son is Logos and Wisdom and Power—for the divine Scriptures, as you know, say that

<sup>47</sup> Athanasius, *De Synodis*, xliii and xlv.

<sup>48</sup> This fragment has been inserted by St. Athanasius in his *De Decretis Nicænæ Synodi*, xxvi. Feltoe, *op. cit.*, pp. 177-182.

<sup>49</sup> *De sententia Dionysii*, xiii.

the Christ is all these—and these are the powers of God. If, then, the Son was produced, there was a time when these were not; there was therefore a moment when God was without these [powers], which is the height of absurdity. And why discuss all this at greater length with you, with men led by the Spirit of God, who see clearly to what absurdities one is led if one says that the Son is a work? I think that those who have taught this opinion have not reflected on it, and that is why they have been wholly deceived, giving an absurd interpretation to the divine and prophetic word: "The Lord has created me, the beginning of his ways." For the phrase "has created me" has, as you know, more than one meaning, and here we must understand "has created me" in the sense of "has set me over" the works produced by him and produced by means of the Son himself. And here we must not understand "has created me" in the sense of "has made me," for there is a difference between "to make" and "to create." "Is he not himself thy Father, who has possessed thee, made thee, and created thee?" says Moses in Deuteronomy, in his great Canticle. We might say to these people: O foolish men: is he then a creature, the first born of all creation, he who was engendered from the bosom [of God] before the morning light, he who, being wisdom, has said: "Before all the hills he engenders me"? Very often in the divine oracles we find that the Son is said to be generated, but not produced. And these texts clearly show that they lie who dare to say that the divine and ineffable generation of the Lord is a production.

Hence, we must not divide the wonderful and divine unity into three divinities, nor lower by [the idea of] production the dignity and excellent greatness of the Lord, but we must believe in God the Father almighty, and in Christ Jesus his Son, and in the Holy Spirit, and [believe that] the Word is united to the God of the universe. For he says: "My Father and I are one single thing"; and "I am in the Father, and the Father is in me." It is thus that we safeguard the divine Trinity, and at the same time the holy preaching of the Monarchy.

The importance of this document is obvious. It shows us in the first place the teaching authority of the Church exercised in a sovereign manner by the Bishop of Rome. The doctrine which is condemned and censured had been upheld by one of the most venerated bishops in the whole Church; the see of Alexandria, and the personal prestige of Dionysius conferred upon the incriminated letter a high authority. Yet it is judged and condemned, and no one thinks of appealing against this judgment.

Dionysius is not the only one affected: together with him, the Roman condemnation is aimed at several of those "who among you [at Alexandria] are catechists and masters of divine doctrine."

Clearly the Pope has in mind the Catechetical School with its Origenist tradition. Doubtless this school was the subject of discussion at Alexandria itself; the denunciation pronounced at Rome shows this sufficiently, and Dionysius of Rome is careful to note that, among the catechists, only a certain number hold the theses here in question. But once again, the bishop is not alone responsible for this teaching, and doubtless that is the explanation of the procedure adopted, namely, the convocation of a Council at Rome, followed by this grave and public letter.

These historical indications are valuable; the doctrinal definition which the text formulates is of still greater importance. What it affirms in the first place is the divine unity. From the time of Victor, Zephyrinus, and Callistus, the defence of this dogma had been the especial care of the bishops of Rome. Dionysius is truly the heir of their faith; to safeguard this unity, he has recourse to the doctrine of Irenæus on "recapitulation":<sup>50</sup> "It is necessary that the divine Word be united to the God of all things; it is necessary that the Holy Spirit return to live and dwell in God; finally, it is absolutely necessary that the divine Trinity be 'recapitulated' and gathered together into one as into one summit, that is, in the God of all things, the Almighty." In this process of the divine life, which flows out of the Father and which thus returns to him, we recognise the relations which unite the three Persons, and which later on will be explained by the doctrine of circumincession.<sup>51</sup>

The theology of God the Son was especially involved in the controversy. The Bishop of Rome applies himself to defend the generation of the Son and his eternity; he develops above all the argument based on the relations between the Son and the Father; the Son is the perfection of the Father, and consequently is, like him, eternal. This argument will be one of the favourite weapons used by the defenders of Nicæa against the Arian heresy in the next century.<sup>52</sup>

It has been observed that the reasoning of the Bishop of Rome makes no mention of the subtle distinctions of the Alexandrians on the twofold state of the Word.<sup>53</sup> Dionysius of Rome was not ignorant

<sup>50</sup> Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, p. 589.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Th. de Regnon, *Études de théologie positive*, Vol. I, p. 405.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, Vol. III, pp. 497 *et seq.*

<sup>53</sup> The observation has been made by Feltoe (*op. cit.*, p. 169, n. 1); it is made again in a harsher form by Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte*, Vol. I, p. 772. Cf. *Revue d'hist. ecclés.*, Vol. XX, 1924, p. 9, n. 1.

of these speculations; he had a wide culture, to which his name-sake of Alexandria bore witness in the letter which he sent him before his elevation to the see of Rome.<sup>54</sup> But here it is not the scholar or theologian who speaks, but the Pope; his function is not to pursue his own personal speculations, but to defend the doctrine entrusted to him.

The letter of Dionysius of Alexandria, in spite of its imprudences or its unfortunate expressions, was certainly far removed from the heresy of Arius; but the letter of Dionysius of Rome already has the Nicæan accent, for it manifests the same care for the divine unity, and the same sovereign and categorical decision in the definition of the Faith. This insurmountable barrier, against which sixty years later Arianism will hurl itself in vain, already arrests an overbold theology.

### Refutation and Apology

Dionysius of Alexandria wrote a work in four books, *Refutation and Apology*,<sup>55</sup> in order to defend and explain his ideas. Only some fragments of it have come down to us.<sup>56</sup>

Though they cannot take the place of the lost work, these fragments at least enable us to understand the ideas of the Bishop of Alexandria in their main points. The method of defence adopted by St. Athanasius, who explained the incriminated passages by applying them to the Incarnate Word, has no support in Dionysius himself.<sup>57</sup> Hence we must understand them of the divine nature of the Word, but give them the benefit of the explanations provided. These are very satisfactory on the question of the eternity of the Word, which is not only affirmed,<sup>58</sup> but proved very effectively from the necessary relation between the Father and his various perfections.<sup>59</sup> This argument was, as we have seen, used by

<sup>54</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VII, viii; cf. St. Basil, *Epist.*, ii, 70.

<sup>55</sup> From the fourth fragment we may infer that Dionysius had not before him the text of the incriminated letter; it is therefore very probable that he was not then at Alexandria but in exile. The pontificate of Dionysius of Rome ran from 22nd July 259 to 26th Dec. 268; the edict of toleration was issued by Gallienus at the end of 260; the controversy must therefore belong to the last months of 259 or 260.

<sup>56</sup> Feltoe, *op. cit.*, pp. 182-198.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Hagemann, *op. cit.*, pp. 427-428; Feltoe, *op. cit.*, p. 194, n. 11.

<sup>58</sup> *Fragm.*, iii.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, iii, vii, viii.

the Pope, and will be utilised also by the Nicene fathers; for the rest, it is in line with Origen's theology. On the question of the generation of the Son, the explanations provided are sometimes not very satisfactory,<sup>60</sup> and Dionysius himself admits that two of his former comparisons were unsuitable.<sup>61</sup> His new affirmations are categorical: for him, as for the other ante-Nicene writers, the Word has truly come forth from the Father. He shows this by the examples of light (iii, xii), a spring (iv, v), human generation (iv, vii, viii), and the human word (xiii). The question of the consubstantiality remains obscure. Dionysius explains that he has not employed the word "consubstantial," because he had not found it in Scripture (iv). He can hardly be blamed for that: the term was not obligatory at that time, and the Pope himself had not made use of it. But the Bishop of Alexandria seems to have an imperfect comprehension of what is implied by consubstantiality, and to confuse it with homogeneity.<sup>62</sup> Thus, in spite of all his protestations, which are obviously sincere, the door remains open, not indeed to Arianism, but to Tritheism.

Lastly, we notice in Dionysius, as in other theologians prior to Nicæa,<sup>63</sup> a dangerous tendency to refer to the external operations of God the relations which constitute the Trinity. To explain the generation of the Word, he studies the cosmological problem of the origin of the world, without noticing that thereby he compromises the eternity of the Word and the necessity of his generation: <sup>64</sup> God might not have created the world, but he could not abstain from generating his Son.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, viii, ix.

<sup>61</sup> The examples of the plant and its cultivator, the boat and its builder: *Fragm.*, iv.

<sup>62</sup> In *Fragment*, iv, he thus defends his idea: "I gave as an illustration human generation, which manifestly produces a term of the same nature; I said there was absolutely no other difference between parents and their children except that the former were not the latter, for otherwise there could not be either parents or children." This comparison suggests that the three Persons belong to the same (divine) race, but it does not lead to their consubstantiality. The Christian dogma as Dionysius of Rome expounds it implies, not a specific unity realised in three substances, as may be found here below in a father and his children, but the numerical unity of one single nature. Cf. Feltoe, *op. cit.*, p. 172.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. *supra*, Bk. II, p. 563 and n. 41.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. Eusebius, *Præp. evang.*, VII, xix (Feltoe, *op. cit.*, pp. 182-185).

<sup>65</sup> This tendency in Alexandrian theology has been well pointed out by Hagemann (*op. cit.*, p. 441). After describing the double movement in the divine life of flux and reflux, as set forth by Dionysius of Rome, he continues: "The Alexandrian theology considered practically only one aspect of these



But in spite of the obscurities which still cover the thought of Dionysius of Alexandria on a few points, it is clear that the letter he received from the Bishop of Rome and the reply he made to it did in great part dissipate the objections. St. Athanasius will rightly point out that these two documents are equally opposed to Arianism: the Roman letter condemns it and the Alexandrian letter repudiates it.<sup>66</sup> But at the same time it must be allowed that the attitude of the Bishop of Alexandria opened the way to denunciations by his diocesans and to remonstrances from Rome. The cause was, as St. Basil suggested later on, "not the perversity of his mind," but his great desire to oppose Sabellius:

I like to compare him to a horticulturist, who, setting out to straighten a twisted young tree, makes an exaggerated effort in the other direction and bends the branch. . . . That is more or less what we see to have happened to this man. He opposed the impiety of the Libyan with all his powers, and he did not perceive that he was allowing his zeal to carry him away into the opposite error. He should have been content to show that the Father and the Son are not personally identical; he would thus have removed the blasphemy. But in order to triumph clearly and abundantly, he taught not only the distinction of the hypostases, but also a difference in essence, subjection in power, and diversity of glory. In this way it came about that he exchanged one evil for another, and did not attain to correctness of doctrine.<sup>67</sup>

In this controversy, which must have been painful to the aged bishop, we can but admire the sincerity of his faith, and the courageous humility of his efforts, but we also realise the hesitations in his theology. Origen had been banished from Alexandria, but his influence, though rejected by some minds, was still strong on many others, and Dionysius himself could not free himself entirely from it. True, he and his were far removed from Arianism, but their teaching had not the firmness of the Roman doctrine. It had not a clear idea of consubstantiality, which will be the subject

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relations: the productive force of the Father and the current of activity which flows therefrom; by closely combining cosmology with the divine processions, it was prevented from considering closely the divine unity in itself apart from the world, and this consideration comes only after the end of this period of the universe." True, Dionysius of Alexandria adhered to the Pope's doctrine on the "recapitulation," but this was by way of an acceptance rather than as a spontaneous and logical inference from his own thought.

<sup>66</sup> *De sententia Dionysii*, xiii.

<sup>67</sup> *Epist.*, i. 9.

of the great conflict sixty years later. Then the danger of these hesitations and obscurities will be realised; the Church will avoid them by the luminous firmness of the Nicene definitions, constituting a faithful echo of the dogmatic letter of Dionysius of Rome.

### *Death of Dionysius of Alexandria*

In 264, Dionysius of Alexandria was called to Antioch to take part in the Council which was to judge Paul of Samosata. He excused himself on account of his great age and his bad health;<sup>68</sup> shortly afterwards he died. He was succeeded in the see of Alexandria by the priest Maximus, who had been distinguished by his devotion during the Decian persecution.<sup>69</sup>

## § 2. ST. GREGORY THAUMATURGUS<sup>1</sup>

### *Life of Gregory Thaumaturgus*

We have already encountered Gregory Thaumaturgus as a disciple of Origen at Cæsarea in Palestine. He was then called Theodore. He belonged to one of the most noble families of Pontus. He and his brother set out for Beirut to study law there, and they both went on to Cæsarea, where their brother-in-law was assessor to the Governor. There they met Origen, to whom Firmilian may have recommended them; they remained with him five years (233-238). Shortly after his return to his own country, Gregory was consecrated bishop by Phaidimos, Bishop of Amasia, and sent by him to Neocæsarea.<sup>2</sup> His brother Athenodorus also received the episcopal office, and worked at his side in that district, which had hitherto been almost entirely pagan. That was about 243, when the two brothers were some thirty years of age.

We have no detailed information on their lives, and know only

<sup>68</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxvii, 2.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, VII, xi, 25.

<sup>1</sup> Bibliography.—Editions: Migne, P.G., Vol. X, 963-1232; *Discourse on Thanksgiving* (i.e. Panegyric on Origen), ed. Koetschau, Freiburg, 1894; *Quæ syriace et armenice supersunt fragmenta*, in Pitra, *Analecta sacra*, Vol. IV, pp. 81-169; transl. pp. 345-412.

Studies: Ryssel, *Gregor der Wunderthäter*, Leipzig, 1880; Bardenhewer, *Geschichte der altkirchlichen Literatur*, Vol. II, pp. 272-289; Puech, *Histoire de la Littérature grecque chrétienne*, Vol. II, pp. 490-509.

<sup>2</sup> Now Niksar, not far away from Tokat.

the main outlines of them. But what we notice in the first place is the remarkable activity of St. Gregory. We learn this above all from the testimonies of St. Gregory of Nyssa and St. Basil.<sup>3</sup> As Duchesne has written,<sup>4</sup> the panegyric of the saint "by St. Gregory of Nyssa and the few details given by St. Basil represent traditions gathered in Pontus about a century after the saint's death, either by the writers themselves, or else by Macrina their grandmother, who had lived in Pontus a short time after Gregory's death, and had perhaps herself seen him." Concluding his panegyric, Gregory of Nyssa writes thus: "Whosoever shall read this discourse will be surprised at the conversion *en masse* of this whole people, who passed from the folly of the Gentiles to the knowledge of the truth. But let no one refuse to believe in it; rather, let him consider how this change from error to the truth came about." St. Basil says in his turn: "What place are we to give to Gregory the Great and to his words? Must we not put him among the apostles and prophets, this man who was led by the same Spirit as they were, who walked in the footsteps of the saints throughout his life, and who during all his lifetime was a model of evangelical living? . . . He had received such a grace of speech to lead the Gentiles to accept obedience to the faith that, though at his arrival he found only seventeen Christians, he taught and converted to God the whole populace of the towns and the country." After recalling his miracles and prophecies, St. Basil adds: "To-day still he is held in veneration in this country; his memory is ever fresh and living in these churches; time has not been able to make it fade. They have desired to add nothing, whether a custom or a word, or a mystic rite, to those he had left to the Church. For this reason the ceremonies in use in this country have an incomplete air, because of their archaic character. For those who succeeded him in the government of the churches have not suffered anything to be added to what he established."<sup>5</sup>

### *The Methods of his Apostolate*

The fruits of this work of evangelisation are seen in the testimony of Basil and his brother, and these fruits are wonderful. We would

<sup>3</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *Vita Gregorii*, Migne, P.G., Vol. XLVI, 893-957; Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto*, xxix, 74; *Epistolæ*, xxviii, 1, 2; cciv, 2; ccvii, 4; ccx, 3, 5.

<sup>4</sup> *Histoire ancienne de l'Eglise*, Vol. I, p. 444, n. 1.

<sup>5</sup> *De Spiritu Sancto*, xxix, 74.

like to know, not only the miracles of the Thaumaturge, but also the methods of his apostolate. Unfortunately only a few of its features have come down to us, but they are worthy of note. Gregory of Nyssa mentions particularly the festivals instituted in honour of the martyrs after the Decian persecution:

Here again is an indication of the great wisdom of this man: he had to form a whole generation *en masse* to a new life. As a driver who knows how to lead nature, he held them firmly by the bridle of the faith and knowledge of God, but at the same time he allowed them to have, under the yoke of the faith, a certain amount of joy and freedom. He had observed that this childlike and uncultivated people were still attached by the pleasures of the senses, to the cult of idols; he wished to make sure above all of essentials, and to turn them away from vain superstitions and to lead them to God; he therefore allowed them to celebrate the memory of the martyrs in joy and gladness; he realised that in time their life would become spontaneously more serious and more regular, inasmuch as the Faith itself would lead them to this. And in fact that is what has happened in the case of the majority: their joy has changed; leaving the pleasures of the body, they have passed to those of the spirit.<sup>6</sup>

This great apostolic work was carried on by St. Gregory in the midst of very great calamities. He had been a bishop for scarcely seven or eight years when the Decian persecution broke out. Like St. Cyprian and St. Dionysius of Alexandria, he had the wisdom to conceal himself: was he not the indispensable support of his church? But his flock, consisting almost entirely of neophytes, as is shown by the passage we have just read, was struck down. The persecution had lasted scarcely a year when Decius perished in the Dobrudja (summer of 251). His army was defeated and dispersed, and the flood of barbarians, Goths and others, spread over the Empire. Pontus was invaded and devastated. When the barbarians had passed, the bishop undertook the task of reviving the decimated Christian communities. From all quarters there arose cases of conscience which had to be solved. These form the subject of the Canonical Letter addressed by Gregory to a bishop whose name is not given.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Discourse on the Life of St. Gregory. Cf. Thomassin, *Traité des fêtes de l'Eglise*, 1683, pp. 503-504; Delehayé, *Les légendes hagiographiques*, p. 202.

<sup>7</sup> This Letter is regarded by the Greek Church as having a canonical value. It is edited by Routh, *Reliquiæ sacræ*, Vol. III, pp. 253-283, and in Migne, *P.G.*, Vol. X, 1020-1048, with the notes of the canonists Balsamon and Zonaras.

### *The Canonical Letter*

Certain Christians are disturbed, fearing that they have eaten things offered to idols; Gregory reassures them. He comforts the virgins who have been outraged against their will, but he is severe towards those who had sinned voluntarily before the invasion. Some had dared to retain by force in their service captives taken by the barbarians: "Send," he says, "men into the country, lest lightning strike these criminals." Others, forgetting that they were inhabitants of Pontus and also Christians, had become the allies of the barbarians, showing them the way and indicating houses to be pillaged; these must be excommunicated until a Council has been held to decide what the saints and above all the Holy Spirit decree in their regard. Robbers, if they have been convicted justly, must be excommunicated; if they have accused themselves, they are to be admitted to penance. In the final canon, the bishop forbids those who conduct themselves well to ask for any reward, for any reason whatsoever, "whether for giving information, or for taking care of anything, or for finding anything."

### *The Creed*

These various features show how Gregory carried out the education of his neophytes, endeavouring to make of them worthy inhabitants of Pontus and Christians. A still more valuable document is his Creed. This has been conserved for us by St. Gregory of Nyssa, who gives the following account of its origin. Gregory had just been consecrated bishop; he was young, appalled at his task, anxious above all about the danger arising from heresies. The Mother of the Lord appeared to him, with St. John the Evangelist, whom she told to expound the faith to Gregory. St. John willingly obeyed, and this divine "mystagogy" is the Creed of Gregory:<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> St. Gregory of Nyssa, *op. cit.*, col. 912. This apparition of the Blessed Virgin is the first to be mentioned in history. It cannot surprise us, if we remember that contemporaries such as St. Cyprian and St. Dionysius mention visions of their own. We must also point out that the special veneration shown here to Our Lady and St. John is not surprising in a disciple of Origen: cf. Origen, *In Joann.*, I, iv, 23: "We dare to say that, if the Gospels are the first-fruits of all the Scriptures, the *Gospel of John* is the first-fruit of the Gospels, and no one can grasp its meaning if he has not rested on the bosom of Jesus and received from Jesus Mary to become his own mother also."

One only God, Father of the living Logos, of the subsistent Wisdom, of the Power, of the eternal Impress, who has perfectly generated a perfect [Son], Father of the only begotten Son.

One only Lord, the sole from the Sole, God of God, impress and image of the Divinity, active Logos, Wisdom which upholds the whole of the Universe, and Power which has made the whole creation, true Son of the true Father, invisible from the invisible, and incorruptible from the incorruptible, immortal from the immortal, and eternal from the eternal.

And one only holy Spirit, having existence from God, and appearing through the Son, image of the Son, perfect from the perfect, the life principle of the living, holiness which confers sanctification, in whom is manifested God the Father, who is above all and in all, and God the Son who is everywhere.

A perfect Trinity, neither divided nor dissipated in glory, eternity, and the kingdom. There is therefore in the Trinity nothing created, nothing servile, nothing introduced from without as not having at first existed and then coming [into existence]. For neither has the Son ever been lacking to the Father, nor the Spirit to the Son, but the same Trinity has ever remained without transformation or change.<sup>9</sup>

This Creed, which is certainly authentic,<sup>10</sup> is a noteworthy one. If we consider its form, we see that it is exclusively Trinitarian,<sup>11</sup> and that in style it is more philosophical than Scriptural.<sup>12</sup> But what is much more important is its doctrinal bearing. It is above all

<sup>9</sup> In this Creed, cf. L. Froidevaux, *Le symbole de saint Grégoire la Thaumaturge*, in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XIX, 1929, pp. 193-247. The authenticity of this Creed has been established by Caspari (*Alte und neue Quellen*, pp. 25-64). Kattenbusch (*Das Apostolische Symbol*, Vol. I, p. 339) wholly accepts this conclusion, so also Hahn and Harnack (*Bibliothek der Symbole*, p. 254, n). Cf. Loofs, *Leitfaden*, pp. 221-222, who, comparing this theology with that of Dionysius, sees in Gregory the right wing, and in Dionysius the left wing of the school of Origen.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. the preceding note. To the internal arguments which have been developed at length by Caspari, and which are very strong, we must add the testimony of St. Basil, quoted above, as to the attachment of the church of Neocæsarea to everything which Gregory had established; this jealous fidelity, which gave an archaic colour to the liturgy of this church, guarantees the authenticity and integrity of the document quoted by Gregory of Nyssa.

<sup>11</sup> We note especially the absence of any Christology. This fact will be better understood if we accept the theory that the formula of the baptismal Creed was originally Trinitarian, and that the Christological formula was added later. Cf. *supra*, Bk. II, p. 473, n. 9.

<sup>12</sup> This feature is characteristic of St. Gregory; we find it again in the Treatise on the Divine Impassibility. Cf. Loofs, *Leitfaden*, p. 223, n. 5; Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte*, Vol. I, pp. 781, 794.

an affirmation of the divine unity. Not only is this unity formulated, against Marcion, as in the majority of creeds at this epoch: "one only God . . . one only Lord . . . one only Spirit"; but, after these three sections devoted to the three divine Persons, a last article has as its subject the Trinity itself: in the Trinity there is no transformation, no change, nothing created, nothing adventitious, nothing which comes into existence after not existing; "neither the Son has ever been lacking to the Father, nor the Spirit to the Son."

In the doctrinal letter of Pope St. Dionysius, a little later than this Creed, we notice a very similar sequence of ideas: after the theological study of the three Persons, the "recapitulation" leads back to the Father the whole divine life as to its source; we recognise here already what the Greeks will call the *perichorsis*, and the Latins *circumincession*. Here we have not this movement of flux and reflux, but after the successive contemplation of the three Persons, the adoration of the Trinity in its eternal and immutable unity. Similar characteristics could be seen in the *Letter to Philagrius* on the Divine Unity,<sup>13</sup> and the *Letter to Theopompus* on the Impassibility of God.<sup>14</sup> This very strong affirmation of the unity of the three divine Persons is a most important document for the history of dogma in the ante-Nicene period. A careful study of it shows that one can no longer represent Eastern theology, even in the school of Origen, as subscribing at that time to Subordinationism, and one has no longer any right to confine to the West and to Rome the orthodox profession of the divine unity.

If after studying this theology we return to the theologian, we must admire him the more. We have shown that he was a great missionary and a founder of churches; from this pagan people he

<sup>13</sup> This Letter has been published in Syriac by Ryssel, *op. cit.*, pp. 65-70; in Syriac and a Latin translation by Pitra, *Analecta*, Vol. IV, pp. 100-103 and 360-363; the Greek text is in Migne, among the works of St. Gregory of Nyssa, Vol. XLVI, 1101-1108. The attribution of this letter to the Thaumaturge is accepted by Ryssel, *loc. laud.*, by Bonwetsch, *Prot. R. Encyklopädie*, Vol. VII, p. 157; by Harnack, *Chronol.*, Vol. II, p. 100; and by Loofs, *Leitfaden*, p. 224.

<sup>14</sup> Published in Syriac by Ryssel, *op. cit.*, pp. 71-99; in Syriac and Latin by Pitra, *op. cit.*, pp. 103-120, 363-387. Its authenticity is recognised by the authors mentioned in the preceding note.

In addition to these theological works, we would mention the little treatise entitled *Discourse to Tatian on the Soul*, if this really were by St. Gregory. But it is apocryphal, and seems to have been composed between the 5th and 7th centuries. It probably contains a fragment of St. Gregory himself. We have studied this treatise and its sources in *Bulletin de Littérature ecclésiastique*, March 1906, pp. 73-83.

managed in a few years to form a Christian community strong enough to suffer without collapsing the Decian persecution and the Gothic invasion; this Thaumaturge might well be compared to St. Martin; equally he is another St. Hilary. And the source of all this, of this theological knowledge and this missionary apostolate, is the school of Origen, in which the young law student had been won for Christ.

Gregory and his brother Athenodorus took part in the Council of Antioch called against Paul of Samosata;<sup>15</sup> they did not appear at the second;<sup>16</sup> Suidas states that Gregory died in the reign of Aurelian.<sup>17</sup>

### § 3. DISCIPLES AND OPPONENTS OF ORIGEN

#### *The Bishops of Laodicea*

The two great bishops we have just been considering, Dionysius of Alexandria and Gregory Thaumaturgus, constitute the greatest glories of the Alexandrian theology at this time. In the second rank we find a whole galaxy of scholars and learned men, who were also disciples of Origen. Their works have perished, but their names have been piously recorded by Eusebius the historian.

One of these, Eusebius of Laodicea, was sent from Alexandria to Antioch on the occasion of the Council called against Paul of Samosata. On his way back, he was retained at Laodicea by "the people of this country, who were devoted to divine things," and who made him their bishop.<sup>1</sup> He died shortly afterwards, and was succeeded by another Alexandrian, Anatolius: "In learning, Greek education and philosophy, he was in the front rank of the most illustrious of our contemporaries; arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, dialectics, physics, and rhetoric had been cultivated by him to their highest degree. It is said that for this reason he was considered worthy by his compatriots of establishing at Alexandria the teaching of Aristotle's doctrine."<sup>2</sup> Theotecnus, Bishop of Cæsarea in Palestine, had chosen him as his own successor, and had given him

<sup>15</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxviii, 1.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Bardy, *Paul de Samosate*, p. 299.

<sup>17</sup> *Lexicon*, s.v. *Gregorios*. Cf. Ryssel, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-19.

<sup>1</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxxii, 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.



episcopal consecration. Anatolius, like Eusebius, went to Antioch, and on the way back, was chosen by the faithful of Laodicea to succeed Eusebius, who had just died. He in turn was succeeded at Laodicea by a man of brilliant talent but weak character, Stephen. "His discourses, his philosophy and his Greek learning made him to be admired by many; but he had not the same attachment for the divine faith, as was shown by the persecution which followed; he appeared as a man given to dissimulation, fearful and cowardly, rather than a true philosopher."<sup>3</sup> Eusebius adds that the church of Laodicea was raised up again by Theodotus, a clever doctor of the body and also of the soul, and moreover "well trained in divine knowledge."<sup>4</sup>

We thus know the four bishops who ruled at Laodicea during the last years of the third and the beginning of the fourth centuries, all of them being distinguished by their talent and erudition, but unequal in moral worth. We see from this example the care taken by the faithful, at least in these churches of Syria and Palestine, to put at their head learned and eloquent men, capable of bringing honour to Christianity among populations which were so fond of fine language, and to this end they even retained strangers if necessary. This is a sign that such men were as yet few in number; the various churches did their best to secure them while they were passing through, and to keep them for the future, as would be done later on in the case of rich patricians such as Pinianus or Paulinus of Nola.

For it is true that, even at this time, after Tertullian and Cyprian, Clement and Origen, Christianity was deficient in defenders who were men of talent, and was still regarded by learned men as a religion of common and uneducated minds.<sup>5</sup> In the great churches of the East, there were doubtless to be found some theologians of note, more brilliant and more influential than those of Laodicea, but these distinguished minds were rare, and masses around them were uncultivated.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxxii, 22.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Lactantius, *Divinæ Institutiones*, V, 1, 18-21 (ed. Brandt, pp. 401-402); Batiffol, *La Paix constantinienne*, p. 144.

<sup>6</sup> We have a proof of this in the affair of Paul of Samosata: in the church of Antioch, even among the Fathers of the Council, there was no one clever enough "to catch this dissimulating and deceitful man," until the priest Malchion intervened. Cf. *infra*, p. 1053.

*The Theologians of Alexandria at the end of the Third Century*

To bring this chapter to a close, we must briefly mention the theologians of Alexandria who, at the end of the third century, defended or attacked the theses set forth by Origen. The correspondence which passed between the two Dionysii, of Alexandria and of Rome, on the subject of the theology of the Trinity, has revealed to us two contrary currents within the church of Alexandria: the Origenist tradition, represented by the bishop Dionysius and the catechists mentioned by the Bishop of Rome, and in opposition to it, the group of those who were alarmed at this tradition, and denounced it to the Pope. We can still distinguish these two tendencies in the thirty or forty years which follow.<sup>7</sup>

*Theognostus and Pierius*

We recognise the Origenist tradition in two priests who were catechists at Alexandria: Theognostus, whose activity was chiefly manifested from the death of St. Dionysius until about 280, under Bishop Maximus, and Pierius, who seems to have taught in the course of the following thirty years, from 280 to 310.

Theognostus<sup>8</sup> wrote seven books entitled *Outlines (Hypotyposes)*. Photius has given us a fairly detailed analysis of them;<sup>9</sup> a few fragments have come down to us. They display a very marked Origenist doctrine,<sup>10</sup> and it is not difficult to understand that this

<sup>7</sup> Cf. L. B. Radford, *Three Teachers of Alexandria, Theognostus, Pierius and Peter*, Cambridge, 1908.

<sup>8</sup> The fragments of Theognostus have been published by Routh, *Reliquæ Sacræ*, Vol. III, pp. 405-422; a new fragment has been published and commented on by Diekamp, *Theologische Quartalschrift*, Vol. LXXXIV, 1902, pp. 481-494. These various fragments and the note by Photius have been once more published and studied by Harnack in *Texte und Untersuchungen*, Vol. XXIV (Neue Folge, IX), III, pp. 73-92.

<sup>9</sup> *Bibl.*, cod. cvi (Migne, P.G., Vol. CIII, 373-376).

<sup>10</sup> According to Photius, Theognostus taught in his second book that the Son is a creature, and that his action extends only to rational beings, and also, he maintained all that Origen said of the Son. The first of these statements is difficult to reconcile with a fragment quoted by Athanasius (*De decretis Nic. synodi*, xxv): "The substance of the Son does not come from without, it does not arise from nothing; it is born of the substance of the Father, as a ray from light, and vapour from water; for neither the ray nor the vapour is the water or the sun; but they are not foreign to them. Thus [the substance of the Son] is not the Father himself, but is not foreign to him, being a derivation of the substance of the Father, this substance moreover is not subject to any division, for just as the sun is not lessened by the rays it sends forth, so also the substance of the

teaching led to the reaction of Peter of Alexandria. At the same time we must add that the summary of Photius seems to be exaggerated if we compare it with one or other of the fragments extant. Harnack recognises some opposition here, but gives the preference to Photius.<sup>11</sup> Diekamp suggests that Theognostus, after the letter of Dionysius of Rome, corrected his Subordinationist doctrine;<sup>12</sup> but the fragments are too short and too uncertain in date to give a solid foundation to this hypothesis.<sup>13</sup>

Pierius is mentioned by Eusebius in terms of great praise: "He was very highly esteemed for his ascetical life and his philosophical knowledge; he was wonderfully successful in the study and explanation of divine things and the exposition which he gave of these to the assembly of the church."<sup>14</sup> To these praises St. Jerome and above all Photius add some amplification. "Pierius was called a new Origen," says St. Jerome,<sup>15</sup> and Photius reports that he taught the pre-existence of souls, that his teaching on the Father and the Son was correct, except that he distinguished in them two natures, but that his doctrine on the Holy Spirit was dangerous and plainly subordinationist.<sup>16</sup> Pierius was much given to preaching, and we have many homilies by him, and in particular, one on the Mother of God, and another on the martyr Pamphilus.<sup>17</sup> Pamphilus had

Father undergoes no change by having the Son as its image." Harnack (*op. cit.*, p. 86) emphasises that Theognostus speaks not of the Son but of the substance of the Son, which he distinguishes from that of the Father. He admits that the text is not very clear, and he concludes that the statement of Photius is more important than this whole fragment. The fragment quoted by Diekamp is more interesting; it sets forth in the first place a study of the names of the Son: the name of Son alone is proper to him; *Logos* and *Sophia* are names given to him in Scripture; as *Logos*, the Son is the image of the Father; "having the resemblance of the Father, he has it according to substance and according to number; that is why there is only one *Logos* and only one *Sophia*."

<sup>11</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 86.

<sup>12</sup> Art. quoted, pp. 493-494; cf. the objections by Harnack, *op. cit.*, pp. 79-82.

<sup>13</sup> Diekamp (*op. cit.*, p. 489) also sees in the fragment he has edited a criticism of Lucian of Antioch, cf. Harnack, *op. cit.*, p. 91. This hypothesis is ingenious, but it remains unproved.

<sup>14</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxxii, 27.

<sup>15</sup> *De viris illustribus*, lxxvii.

<sup>16</sup> *Biblioth.*, cod. cxviii.

<sup>17</sup> Philip of Sidon, cf. De Boor, in *Texte und Untersuchungen*, Vol. V, 2, p. 171. The fragments of Pierius will be found in Routh, *Reliquæ sacræ*, Vol. III, pp. 423-435, and in the study by De Boor just mentioned (*Texte*, Vol. V, 2, pp. 165-184). A briefer treatment in Migne, *P.G.*, Vol. X, 241-246.

been a disciple of Pierius, and it may well be that it was from Pierius he derived his own Origenist doctrine.<sup>18</sup>

### *St. Peter of Alexandria*

The theologians we have just mentioned show the lasting influence of Origen's teaching at Alexandria. But it did not flourish there without opposition; it was vigorously attacked by St. Peter, who was Bishop of Alexandria<sup>19</sup> and who crowned his life by martyrdom. Eusebius does homage to his exemplary life and to his martyrdom;<sup>20</sup> he says nothing of his theology, the anti-Origenist tendency of which can have been little to his taste. This silence has deprived St. Jerome and ourselves of our habitual source of information. A few titles and a few lines are all that remain to us of the doctrinal output of Peter of Alexandria.<sup>21</sup> But these fragments nevertheless suffice to show its direction. In his treatise *Against the Monophysites*, Leontius of Byzantium quotes two passages from a work of Peter opposing the pre-existence of souls. This doctrine, says the holy bishop, "comes from the Hellenic philosophy; it is foreign to those who wish to live piously in Christ." In the Acts of the Council of Ephesus in 431, we find three quotations taken from the work of Peter of Alexandria on the Godhead; they reject subordinationism; they also reject the allegorical interpretation of Genesis.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>18</sup> We must give at least a brief reference to Hierakas. He is known to us through St. Epiphanius (*Hær.*, lxvii). According to this father, Hierakas was about the year 300 the leader of a group of ascetics of both sexes who lived at Leontopolis in the Delta. He wrote various works in Coptic and in Greek, but we do not know their titles. In them he defended several Origenist theses, particularly in the matter of the resurrection; he condemned marriage; his doctrine on the Trinity was on the whole more correct than that of Origen, but he regarded Melchisedech as a manifestation of the Holy Spirit. On this error, and others connected with it, see Bardy, art. *Melchisédecien*, in *Dict. de Théol. cath.*, Vol. X, cols. 513-516.

<sup>19</sup> From the summer of 300 to November 311.

<sup>20</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxxii, 31: "After Theonas, who had served for nineteen years, Peter occupied the episcopal throne of Alexandria. Before the persecution, he governed this church for three years; he spent the rest of his life in a very severe asceticism practised in common, and saw to the general needs of the churches without hiding himself. In consequence, in the ninth year of the persecution he was beheaded, and honoured with the crown of martyrdom."

<sup>21</sup> Routh, *Reliquæ sacræ*, Vol. IV, pp. 19-82; Migne, P.G., Vol. XVIII, 449-522; Pitra, *Analecta sacra*, Vol. IV, pp. 187-195, 425-430.

<sup>22</sup> Texts quoted by Procopius, *apud* Routh, *op. cit.*, pp. 50, 78. In the same work (p. 48) will be found a fragment quoted by Leontius of Byzantium on the two natures in Jesus Christ.

These fragments are of great value to us because they throw some light on the doctrinal history of the church of Alexandria during this obscure period extending from the death of Dionysius to the episcopate of Alexander. They are sufficient to show us in St. Peter a forerunner of the great bishops of the fourth century, St. Alexander and St. Athanasius. Though the theologian is almost unknown to us, we are better acquainted with the pastor of souls.

### *The Penitential Question*

After the first outburst of the Diocletian persecution the penitential question arose, as it had arisen fifty years earlier after the Decian persecution. The decisions and directions given by St. Peter were inspired by the same spirit as those of St. Dionysius, St. Cyprian, and St. Cornelius; they are known to us through the penitential canons which have been preserved for us in the canonical collections.<sup>23</sup> It will be useful to indicate their principal enactments, following the order of the canons themselves:

1. Those who, after being denounced, put in prison, and subjected to cruel torments, have finally lost courage, are worthy of pardon, for they have yielded only to the weakness of the flesh; they bear the wounds of Jesus, and already for three years they have done penance. They are to be given a further penance of forty days, beginning from the day in which they informed us of their return; during this time they are to fast, to watch, and to pray.

2. Those who have not been tormented, but have been overcome by the sufferings and infection of the prisons, are to add a year of penance to the time already fulfilled. It is true they have been weak, and very blind, but they were delivered up to suffer for the Name; they have been comforted in prison by the charity of the brethren; they will return all this a hundredfold by doing their best to free themselves from the captivity of the devil.

3. Those who, without undergoing either torments or imprisonment, went spontaneously to apostatise, must spend four more years in penance.

4. Those who have freed themselves by fraud, by procuring false certificates, or by sending pagan friends in their stead, are to do six months' penance.

<sup>23</sup> P. de Lagarde, *Reliquiæ juris ecclesiæ antiquissimæ*, Leipzig, 1856, pp. 63-73 (Greek text) and 99-117 (Syriac text). These canons seem to have formed part of the Easter letter of 306.

5. Those who sent in their place their Christian slaves are to do four years' penance, and their guilty slaves one year.

6. Those who have expiated a former apostasy by imprisonment or torment have no need of any other penance; we receive them with joy.

7. Those who went out to meet those who sought them acted imprudently, and in opposition to the example of the Lord and the apostles; nevertheless if they resisted, we admit them to communion, and retain them in the clerical offices they may have held. On the other hand, those clerics who in these circumstances defaulted cannot be restored to the ranks of the clergy, even after a new confession.

8. Yet we approve the conduct of those who thus declared themselves in the course of the interrogations of other Christians, above all when they did so to keep up the courage of these others.

9. It is good to pray for those whom the violence of torments has caused to fall.

10. Those are not to be accused who redeemed themselves by money;

11. nor those who fled, as was done by St. Paul at Ephesus, St. Peter in his prison at Jerusalem, and the child Jesus at Bethlehem.

12. Those whose mouths have been held open with bridles or chains (in order to make them drink the wine of libations or to eat food offered to idols), or who have had their hands burnt by the incense of the sacrifices, are no less to be regarded as confessors of Christ, and honoured as such.<sup>24</sup>

This prudent and firm legislation is based on principles which the Church has professed from the beginning: she blames and censures over-bold provocation of the authorities; she authorises flight from persecutors: she makes allowances for violence which the body may have suffered, but in which the will had no part; she condemns all collapses, punishing them with penalties varying in severity according to their gravity. In all these sanctions we recognise the fatherly wisdom which fifty years earlier had inspired the great bishops of Rome, Carthage and Alexandria.<sup>25</sup>

### *The Meletian Schism*

Once again, the penitential legislation was the occasion of a schism. Meletius, Bishop of Lycopolis, had profited by the imprison-

<sup>24</sup> Migne, P.G., Vol. XVIII, 468-508.

<sup>25</sup> The reconciliation of apostates is not here postponed, as it had been previously, to the day of death; but the peace of the Church had not been thereby restored, as the sequel sufficiently shows; the same consideration had led Cyprian in 253 to modify the first severe measures. Cf. Bk. III, p. 850.

ment of four bishops during the persecution to invade their churches against their wills, and also that of Peter of Alexandria, who was rendered powerless by the persecution if not actually thrown into prison. The injured bishops sent to Meletius a vehement protest:

Our fathers have established and laid down the rule that no bishop may hold an ordination in other churches. . . . But you, without regard to their decisions, without thought of the future, or of the traditional law of our blessed fathers pleasing to Christ, or of the honour of our great bishop and father Peter, upon whom we all depend, according to the hope we have in the Lord Jesus Christ, unmindful of our imprisonments, our trials, or the thousand insults we suffer every day, to the grief and distress of all, have gone so far as to overthrow everything. . . .<sup>26</sup>

Meletius was not moved by this letter; on the contrary, he went to Alexandria, set aside the representatives of Bishop Peter, and substituted for them men of his own choice. St. Peter replied to this usurpation by forbidding his flock to communicate with Meletius. The four prelates died martyrs; the persecution diminished; the Bishop of Alexandria resumed once more the government of his church, and settled the status of apostates in the way we have mentioned.

Meletius at once took up a contrary attitude, and made himself a champion of rigorism, as Novatian had done in Rome. The church of Alexandria was torn asunder by the schism. Very soon the persecution was revived; many Christians were deported to the mines of Phæno. Meletius was sent there, together with a certain number of his adherents; he there resumed his propaganda and his campaign; partisans of Peter and partisans of Meletius confronted one another even in this convict prison. In the spring of 311, the edict of Galerius restored to the captives their freedom. Meletius returned to Egypt; but very soon Maximin renewed the persecution, and on 25th November 311 St. Peter was beheaded.

This glorious death did not put an end to the controversy; the Meletians set up their own church, the "church of the martyrs" as they called it, in opposition to the church of Peter, ruled by the bishop St. Alexander after the very short episcopate of Achillas. The Council of Nicæa tried in vain to bring the schism to an end

<sup>26</sup> Migne, P.G., Vol. X, 1565-1568.

by a policy of indulgence; it was in the ranks of the Meletians that Arius, himself a Meletian, found in Egypt his most enthusiastic followers; Athanasius would have a painful proof of this, especially in the Council of Tyre in 335.<sup>27</sup>

It is not for us to follow out this history, which belongs to the fourth century; but it was desirable for us to explain the origins of this schism. Independently of the doctrinal controversies, it sowed amongst the clergy of Alexandria<sup>28</sup> and of the whole of Egypt seeds of discord which Arianism would bring to full fruition. Arius was an adherent of Meletius; it was from the Meletian schism that Arianism arose and grew.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Cf. D'Alès, *op. cit.*, pp. 203-242, "Le schisme méletien d'Egypte." The papyri published in 1924 by M. H. Idris Bell have added to the documentation of this matter two interesting items of information which are translated on pp. 232 and 234 of that work.

<sup>28</sup> It was the clergy in the first place who sided with the schism of Meletius. At the beginning of the movement, Epiphanius says that Peter of Alexandria, pressed by Meletius at a meeting of the clergy, laid down his mantle to separate the two camps: "Let those who are with me come to this side, and those who are with Meletius go to the other." Epiphanius adds that the majority of the clergy went to the side of Meletius.

<sup>29</sup> The schisms which arose at Rome and in Africa on the occasion of this same persecution will be referred to later.



THE CHURCH OF ANTIOCH AT THE  
END OF THE THIRD CENTURY§ 1. PAUL OF SAMOSATA<sup>1</sup>*Paul of Samosata, Bishop of Antioch*

THE death of Valerian in 260 had been the beginning of a series of disasters for the Roman Empire: Antioch, Tarsus, and Cæsarea in Cappadocia had been captured, pillaged and burnt. The Prince of Palmyra, Septimius Odaenathus II, thereupon assumed the title of king and set himself up as lieutenant of the Emperor Gallienus, against Sapor and also against Macrienus, who had elevated to the empire his two sons Quietus and Macrienus. In 262 Septimius triumphed over these two groups of enemies: he defeated Sapor before Ctesiphon; and took the town of Emesa where Quietus was killed, while Macrienus and his second son perished in Illyria.

It was through these events that Paul of Samosata rose to the episcopate: in 260 the Bishop of Antioch, Demetrianus, died a captive of the Persians; Paul succeeded to him. He relied on the support of the Palmyrian dynasty; he represented himself at Antioch as "ducenarius" or Chancellor of the Exchequer; though born of poor parents, he amassed a considerable fortune, and startled the whole city by his insolent display of luxury.<sup>2</sup>

*First Council (264)*

Paul crowned all these disorders by teaching heresy. In 264 a Council was called; the most prominent of its members were: Firmilian, Bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia; Gregory and Athenodorus his brother, pastors of the Pontine churches; Helenus, Bishop of Tarsus; Nicomas, Bishop of Iconium; Hymeneus, Bishop of Jerusalem; Theotecnes of Cæsarea in Palestine; and Maximus of

<sup>1</sup> Bibliography.—G. Bardy, *Paul de Samosate, étude historique*, new edn., Louvain, 1929; F. Loofs, *Paulus von Samosata*, Leipzig, 1924.

<sup>2</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxvii, 1.

Bostra.<sup>3</sup> Dionysius of Alexandria was invited but excused himself because of his ill health and his old age (he died in fact shortly afterwards), but he made his views clear by a letter.<sup>4</sup>

Faced by the bishops of the council, Paul dissimulated, shuffled, and promised to amend, and the bishops separated without coming to a conclusion. But in an endeavour to keep this slippery man in the path of orthodoxy, six of the bishops drew up a formula of faith, and requested the accused to subscribe to it. This document is of great interest because of the doctrine it affirms, and also because of the vigour of the expressions which emphasise its meaning:

If anyone refuses to believe and confess that the Son of God is God, we consider that he is outside the ecclesiastical rule, and all the Catholic churches are in agreement with us.

The bishops set forth at length the pre-existence of the Son, his divinity, his office in the creation of the world, and his appearances in the Old Testament. They dwell on his Incarnation:

[We confess] that the Son who is with the Father is God and Lord of all created things, and that he was sent from heaven by the Father, and that, being made flesh, he became man. Hence the body born of the Virgin, which received all the plenitude of the divinity, was united in an immutable way to the divinity and deified, without any change in the Word himself; that is why the same Jesus Christ was prophesied as God and man in the Law and the prophets, and is now the object of the faith of the whole church under heaven: God, who has stripped himself of equality with God; man, of the race of David according to the flesh.

This long profession of faith finishes with a peremptory summons: "Out of many other points, we have chosen these few beliefs, and we wish to know if you think as we do, and if you teach them, and will subscribe or not to what we have written."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxviii, 1.

<sup>4</sup> Eusebius remarks (*Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxvii, 2): "Dionysius . . . set out in a letter his opinion on the matter"; the Fathers of the Council say more explicitly: "He wrote a letter to Antioch, but he did not do the heresiarch the honour of addressing himself to him directly; it was the whole Church that he addressed" (*Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxx, 3).

<sup>5</sup> The text of this document will be found in Loofs, *Paulus von Samosata*, pp. 324-330, and in Bardy, *Paul de Samosate*, pp. 13-19. Its authenticity, long questioned, has been established firmly by these two historians. Cf. Bardy, *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. VI, 1916, pp. 17-32.

*Scandalous Life of Paul*

The Bishop of Antioch does not seem to have worried about this letter; the Council had dispersed and his accusers were far away; he returned to his ostentatious and licentious life. The Council which condemned him gave this description of him:

He organises a theatrical pomp in the Church assemblies, seeking for glory, appealing to the imaginations and attracting the attention of the simple. . . . Those who do not praise him and who do not wave their handkerchiefs as in the theatres, who do not cry out, or stand up, as do those of his party, men and girls who listen to him in a shameless way—those who listen to him as one ought to do in the house of God, with respect and reserve, are singled out by him and made the subject of reproaches. The interpreters of the Word who have left this world are treated by him with disdain, in a rude manner in the assembly, while he boasts of himself emphatically, not as a bishop, but as a sophist and a charlatan. As for the chants in honour of Our Lord Jesus Christ, he has forbidden them as being too modern, and written by too modern men; but in his own honour, and openly in the church on Easter Day he caused women to sing whom one would be horrified to hear. . . . He is not willing to confess with us that the Son of God came down from heaven . . . ; but those who sing in his honour and utter his praises among the people say that their wicked master is an angel who has descended from heaven; this he does not prevent, but on the contrary he is present at their discourses, insolent man as he is.<sup>6</sup>

This picture, drawn at Antioch itself by the judges of the unworthy bishop, brings him out into full light. Of all the heretics of the age, there was not one who had denied the Christian faith and outraged the Church with such impudence. Nevertheless we recognise here, pushed to the extreme, some features observed elsewhere: fifteen years earlier, in his *De lapsis*, St. Cyprian denounced certain bishops who “despised their divine functions and made themselves attendants of the great landowners”; that was a feeble anticipation of what we now see in this Bishop of Antioch who was Chancellor of the Exchequer. Above all we are reminded of the reproaches directed by Hippolytus previously against the Roman Adoptionists, Artemon and his disciples: for these men the adoration of Christ was an innovation, and they had to be reminded of “the numerous canticles and hymns composed by the faithful brethren of the earliest days, in which they sang of Christ as the

<sup>6</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxx, 9-11.

Word of God, and worshipped him as God.”<sup>7</sup> Paul of Samosata in his turn decreed that “all the chants in honour of Our Lord Jesus Christ are too modern, and written by men who are too modern.” At the same time he encouraged his admirers to praise himself, and to sing hymns in his honour; he thus prepared the way for Arius, who likewise was to compose poems exalting his own person and his doctrine.<sup>8</sup>

### *Second Council (268)*

Such abuses could not be tolerated for long; the calling together of the six bishops testifies to their anxiety and their desire to put an end to the trouble. Firmilian, Bishop of Cæsarea of Cappadocia, who had been the most influential member of the first Council, felt that he had been tricked by the heretic; accordingly a new Council was called. Firmilian started out on the journey to Antioch, but was unable to complete it, and died at Tarsus.<sup>9</sup> The assembly to which he was proceeding comprised a great number of bishops,<sup>10</sup> and was to pronounce on this matter the definitive judgment which the situation required.

### *Condemnation of Paul of Samosata*

It was not without difficulty that the heretic was at last convicted and condemned; the credit for it belongs above all to the priest Malchion:

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, V, xxviii, 3. Cf. Bk. III, p. 727.

<sup>8</sup> We may also recall what Dionysius of Alexandria said of Nepos, Bishop of Arsinoë, and his rhapsodies (cf. *supra*, p. 1026). Here we do not find any sacrilegious abuse, but we notice the great importance at that time of the Church's chants.

<sup>9</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxx, 4. The synodical letter of the Council says: “Firmilian came twice, and condemned the innovations introduced by Paul; we who are present here know this and testify to it, and many others know it as we do. Paul promised to change; Firmilian believed him, and hoped that, without injury to doctrine, the matter would have a fitting end. He temporised, deceived by this man, who denied his God and his Lord, and did not keep the faith he had possessed. Firmilian had started from Antioch, and had reached Tarsus; he knew by experience the malice of this wicked man. But we met together and called him, and were waiting for his arrival when his life came to an end.” From this passage many historians have inferred that the definitive Council was the third one. This inference does not seem to be a necessary one: Firmilian had gone twice to Antioch, but this does not prove that he was present at two different Councils. Moreover, it is hardly likely that the Fathers would have allowed themselves to be deceived twice. Cf. Bardy, *Paul de Samosate*, pp. 293-294.

<sup>10</sup> St. Athanasius speaks of seventy bishops at least (*De synodis*, xliii); St. Hilary mentions eighty (*De synodis*, lxxxvi); quoted by Bardy, *op. cit.*, p. 298.

He was an eloquent man, who had been the head of a philosophical school at Antioch in which the teaching of the Greeks was set forth; because of the excellent purity of his faith in Christ he was honoured with the priesthood in the church of that country. He argued against Paul; he alone was strong enough to overcome this dissimulating and deceitful man.<sup>11</sup>

The account of the discussion, which Eusebius was still able to consult, would be of the greatest interest to us; unfortunately we have only a few fragments.<sup>12</sup> Failing a complete account, we could wish to have in its entirety the synodical letter. Addressed by the Fathers of the Council to Dionysius, Bishop of Rome, and to Maximus, Bishop of Alexandria, this letter "established clearly the perverse heterodoxy of Paul, the refutations and the questions which the bishops had put to him, and it also gave an account of his whole life and conduct."<sup>13</sup> From this document Eusebius has transcribed the censure of the morals of the condemned bishop, but not the exposition of his teaching; it is difficult to supply the place of this omission.<sup>14</sup> The document concluded with an excommunication in these terms:

<sup>11</sup> Cf. *Hist. eccles.*, VII, XXIX, 2. On the method of these discussions, compare what Eusebius tells us concerning the argumentation of Origen at Bostra against Bishop Beryllus. Eusebius had the text of this before him (*Hist. eccles.*, VI, xxxiii, 3). Dionysius described his discussion with Nepos in greater detail (*Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxiv, 8): the argument continued for "three consecutive days, from dawn till evening."

<sup>12</sup> These fragments have been collected together and commented on by Bardy, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-79.

<sup>13</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxx, 1.

<sup>14</sup> Paul's teaching has been exposed by Bardy in his work, III, pp. 427-520, and more briefly in his article *Paul de Samosate* in *Dict. de Théol. cath.*, Vol. XII, cols. 49-51. It is difficult to set forth Paul's theology with precision, and it would be rash to claim to do so. But we can at least determine some of its features: first of all, its Monarchianism: Paul did not recognise three persons in God, but "he gave the name of Father to God who has created all things, that of Son to him who was purely man, and that of Spirit to the grace which resided in the apostles" (Leontius, *De sectis*, iii, 3). Jesus was greater than the prophets or Moses: "Wisdom has not dwelt in such a way in any other. It was in the prophets, and still more in Moses, and in many masters, but more in Christ, as in a temple." This indwelling of Wisdom is not an incarnation: Jesus Christ is not the Word; the Word is greater than Christ; Mary did not engender the Word; she received the Word, she engendered a man equal to us, though better in every respect, for he was born of the Holy Spirit and of the promises and the Scriptures, and because grace was upon him. All this brings us back to Adoptionism: Christ is only a man like the rest, but he is holier.

One last feature, which concerns the history of Christian doctrine, must be mentioned. The Fathers of the Council of Antioch condemned the use of the

We have therefore been obliged, after excommunicating this obstinate adversary of God, to establish in his place for the Catholic Church another bishop, in order to obey the Providence of God, as we are conscious of doing. This is Domnus, the son of the blessed Demetrian who before Paul governed this church well. He is possessed of all the qualities which belong to a bishop; we inform you of this, so that you may write to him and receive his letters of communion. Let the other write to Artemas and let the followers of Artemas hold communion with him.<sup>15</sup>

The Council which passed this sentence seems to have met during the autumn of 268. At that date Odaenathus, King of Palmyra, had died (267). His widow Zenobia had taken the reins of power, in trust for her sons.<sup>16</sup> She extended her sway as far as Alexandria on the one hand, and as far as Chalcedon on the other. But at the end of 271, Egypt was reconquered by Probus, the future emperor, and in 272, after defeating the soldiers of Zenobia three times, Aurelian captured Palmyra. He pardoned the queen and her sons, but had her counsellors put to death, including Longinus the rhetorician.

### *Expulsion of Paul*

This collapse of Zenobia's power deprived Paul of Samosata of the support which had protected him. Defying the conciliar decision he had remained in the episcopal house, and the Catholics had not been able to dislodge him. They appealed to Aurelian; the emperor "ordered that the house should be given to those to whom the bishops of Italy and of the city of Rome should allot it. In this way the man was expelled from the church with the utmost shame

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word *homoousios* (consubstantial), because Paul had employed it in order to efface the personal distinction between the Father and the Son, and thereby to make Christ "to be Son of God only as a word or the sound of a voice." Cf. the testimony of St. Epiphanius (*Hær.*, LXV, 1; LXXI, 11), and especially of Basil of Ancyra (*apud* Epiphanius, *Hær.*, LXXIII, 1, and xii-xxii), followed by St. Hilary (*De synodis*, lxxxi). This brings out the fluctuations in the terminology, and the obscurities to which these led: less than ten years previously, Dionysius of Alexandria was criticised for not using the term *homoousios*; at Antioch it was set aside because of its abuse by Paul of Samosata; fifty years later on it would be insisted upon at Nicæa. Cf. P. Galtier, *L'Homoousios de Paul de Samosate*, in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XIII, 1922, pp. 30-45.

<sup>15</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxx, 17.

<sup>16</sup> First on behalf of Vaballath, and then, on his death (271), for her two other sons.

by the secular arm.”<sup>17</sup> From this date Paul of Samosata disappears from history. He had had some adherents,<sup>18</sup> but these were doubtless for the most part timid folk who were terrified by his boldness and who did not dare to oppose him. After his fall, his party disappeared. But in 325 the Council of Nicæa still had to legislate concerning the reconciliation of partisans of Paul who had returned to the Catholic Church or who wished to do so.<sup>19</sup> As for the doctrine of the heresiarch, this left even less traces. It had been denounced as a new form of the heresy of Artemon; and later on the Nestorians were accused of renewing the same errors. But these facts denote less a real filiation than a similarity existing between all these heresies; in Artemon and Paul of Samosata, they resulted from Rationalism; they led directly to the denial of the divinity of Christ, and this led to their destruction.

## § 2. ST. LUCIAN OF ANTIOCH AND HIS SCHOOL<sup>1</sup>

### *The Problem of Lucian of Antioch*

The person, doctrine and influence of St. Lucian of Antioch raise many problems which it is difficult to solve. A historian who studied this matter with the greatest care wrote at the end of one of his early works: “We have not succeeded in throwing light on

<sup>17</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxx, 19. Bardy (*op. cit.*, p. 363) gives a very correct interpretation of this judgment: “By having recourse to Aurelian, the Catholics of Antioch gave a sufficient proof of their loyalty, and clearly distinguished their own cause from that of Zenobia. But Rome is here regarded as the capital of Christianity, not as that of the Empire. If the emperor decides that the property belongs to those who communicate with Rome, it is because he cannot ignore the unique place which the Church of Rome occupies in regard to all Christians.”

<sup>18</sup> *Hist., eccles.*, VII, xxx, 10. In the synodical letter, the Fathers of the Council speak of the bishops of the neighbouring country, and of the priests who flatter them in their sermons.

<sup>19</sup> Canon 19. Cf. Bardy, *op. cit.*, pp. 390 *et seq.*

<sup>1</sup> Bibliography.—Cf. Bardy, *Le symbole de Lucien d'Antioche*, in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. III, 1912, pp. 139-155; 230-244; *Saint Lucien d'Antioche et son école*, *ibid.*, Vol. XXII, 1932, pp. 437-462; *Le Discours apologétique de saint Lucien d'Antioche*, in *Dict. de Théol. cath.*, Vol. IX, cols. 1024-1031; *Recherches sur saint Lucien d'Antioche et son école*, Paris, 1936. Besides these works by G. Bardy, it will be profitable to consult the histories of dogma and of Arianism, such as Tixeront, *Histoire des Dogmes*, Vol. II, pp. 20-22 and 27; Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte*, Vol. II, pp. 187-190; D'Alès, *Le Dogme de Nicée*, pp. 52-56; K. Müller, *Kirchengeschichte*, Vol. I, pp. 375-378; Kirsch, *Kirchengeschichte*, Vol. I, p. 326.

the puzzling personality of Lucian of Antioch. Neither rehabilitated nor condemned, this learned exegete remains for us a mystery."<sup>2</sup> That statement was made more than thirty years ago. Since then this problem has been the subject of many discussions and many researches. Such great labour has doubtless not been in vain, but the mystery has not been entirely clarified.

### *Lucian's Theology*

During the great persecution, after the Edict of Maximin, a priest named Lucian was arrested at Antioch, transferred to Nicomedia, and put to death on the 7th January 312.<sup>3</sup> The Empress Helen and the whole imperial family regarded him with particular veneration. The Bishop of the imperial city, Nicomedia, boasted that Lucian had been his master. Nor was he the only one to do so: the upholders of the Arian heresy, beginning with Arius himself, were at some time pupils of Lucian: at the time when the heresy broke out, they occupied several of the chief sees of the East. Philostorgius mentions among them: Eusebius of Nicomedia, Maris of Chalcedon, Theognis of Nicæa, Leontius who became Bishop of Antioch, Antony of Tarsus, and many others.<sup>4</sup>

This whole group of "Collucianists," as Arius himself calls them,<sup>5</sup> constituted a very closely knit party, which ardently upheld the cause of Arius. Against them, St. Alexander of Alexandria, who led the attack against Arianism, directly accused Lucian as the master of Arius and also as the successor of Paul of Samosata. He wrote thus in his letter addressed to the bishops of Egypt, the Thebais, Libya, Pentapolis, Syria, Lycia, Pamphylia, Asia, Capadocia, and other neighbouring places: <sup>6</sup>

You yourselves have been instructed by God; you are not unaware that this teaching, which is setting itself up against the faith of the Church, is the doctrine of Ebion and Artemas; it is the perverse theology of Paul of Samosata, who was expelled from the church at Antioch by a conciliar sentence of bishops from all places; his successor

<sup>2</sup> Bardy, *art. cit.*, in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. III, 1912, p. 244.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. E. Schwartz, *Zur Geschichte des Athanasius*, in *Nachrichten der K. Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen*, 1904, p. 529, n. 4.

<sup>4</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, II, xiv.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Theodoret, *Hist. eccles.*, I, v, 4.

<sup>6</sup> Theodoret, *Hist. eccles.*, I, iv. Theodoret is transcribing the copy sent to Alexander of Byzantium.



Lucian remained for a long time excommunicated under three bishops; the dregs of the impiety of those heretics have been absorbed by these men who have arisen from nothing. . . . Arius, Achillas, and the whole band of their companions in malice.

It seems impossible to reject a testimony so close to the facts and of so solemn a character.<sup>7</sup> We must not infer from it that the theology of Lucian was identical with that of Paul of Samosata,<sup>8</sup> but only that Lucian, like Paul, misrepresented the divinity of the Son of God, and in that respect opened the way to Arius.<sup>9</sup>

### *The Antiochene Origins of Arianism*

This discussion was necessary, not only to understand as far as is possible the enigmatic personality of Lucian of Antioch, but above all to bring out the source of Arianism as an Antiochene rather than an Alexandrian heresy. Doubtless it was first of all taught at Alexandria, but even so it was taught by one who was a pupil of the school of Antioch. Moreover, throughout the fourth century it will not succeed in taking root at Alexandria or in Egypt, but it will implant itself deeply in the whole dependency of Antioch.<sup>10</sup> In its literal exegesis, and its captious and rationalistic

<sup>7</sup> Certainly the difficulties are great; nevertheless I do not think that this testimony can be set aside, as is done by Bardy (*Recherches sur saint Lucien*, pp. 50-59). Only ten years separate this letter from Lucian's death; the Bishop of Alexandria, in sending it to all the bishops of the East, could not speak of this prolonged excommunication of Lucian, the master of so many bishops, without serious protests if the accusation were a false one.

<sup>8</sup> Arianism does not derive from Monarchianism, as does the heresy of Paul of Samosata, but from Subordinationism; the Bishop of Alexandria does not say anything to the contrary, but he includes in one and the same condemnation all those who deny the divinity of the Son of God, Ebion, Artemas, Paul, Lucian and Arius.

<sup>9</sup> Some are surprised that from the school of Lucian, excommunicated under three bishops of Antioch, should have come so many bishops, and certainly their elections are astonishing. We may say, as a partial explanation, that if Lucian was excommunicated under the three bishops, Domnus, Timæus and Cyril, the penalty came to an end at the latest when Bishop Cyril was in 303 condemned to the mines and replaced by Tyrannus. This brings us to twenty years before the letter of Alexander. In the interval, the suspicion with which Lucian had been regarded had been dispelled by his martyrdom; the prestige of his learning could have recommended his old pupils to the choice of the Christians; cf. what we said above (p. 1041) about the bishops of Laodicea. We may add that the Collucianists appear to us as very closely knit together; they doubtless helped each other to obtain these great sees of the East.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Bardy, *Saint Lucien d'Antioche et son école*, in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XXII, 1932, p. 445. The bishops of Palestine were to a great

reasoning, Arianism is connected, not with the idealism of Origen, but much more with the Scriptural labours of Lucian<sup>11</sup> and the dialectics of Paul of Samosata. At the same time we must admit that the subordinationism of Origen provided a certain support for the theology of Arius. Throughout the East which had been so deeply penetrated by the influence of Origen, the negations of Arius and Eusebius of Nicomedia will often meet, if not with sympathy, at least with hesitation; they arise from those temerarious speculations concerning the hierarchy of the divine persons which we have pointed out in Origen, Dionysius of Alexandria, and in some of their successors. Already we have a foretaste of the violence and the dangers of the conflict; to bring about the triumph of the Trinitarian theology so firmly defended by Dionysius of Rome, there will be required the unshakable constancy of St. Athanasius, upheld by the authority of the See of Rome.

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extent in agreement with the Lucianists, while the majority of the bishops of Egypt and the Pentapolis grouped themselves around the Bishop of Alexandria.

<sup>11</sup>Cf. Bardy, *Saint Lucien d'Antioche et son école*, in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XXII, 1932, p. 454: "His teaching [i.e. that of Lucian], in the measure in which we are able to judge it according to those who formed it, was essentially Biblical; . . . like Origen before him, he was a Scripturist; but the careful attention he gave to the text itself of the Scriptures must have kept him free from the fantasies of the Allegorical school; he led his pupils into the sphere of a positive exegesis which was doubtless less brilliant than the spiritual interpretation."

# RELIGIOUS TENDENCIES IN THE THIRD CENTURY, AND THEIR ACTION UPON THE CHURCH<sup>1</sup>

## § I. THE DOCTRINAL CONTROVERSIES

### *Scope of the Christian Faith in the Third Century*

THE history of the Church in the course of the third century, its progressive expansion and the development of its doctrine have been described in the preceding chapters stage by stage. After studying the persecution under Severus, we have been able to follow, in Rome, Africa, Alexandria and in Palestine, the strong growth of the Christian Faith; from 250 to 260 Decius and Valerian endeavoured by terrible assaults to curb this development; but the persecutors died, and the Church resumed its work of conquest; it pervaded the Roman world, penetrating one after another all the provinces of the Empire and all classes of society.

This conquest of the masses was a triumph for the Christian faith, but it also constituted a great danger for it. Would the Christian leaven be sufficiently powerful to leaven all this paste, or would it lose itself in this great mass? Would the leaders of the Church be the "salt of the earth," or would they instead lose their savour and be fit only to be trodden under foot? This problem became especially acute in this century, and the Gospel had to give a proof of its power. The facts we have set forth suffice to show that the Church came triumphantly through this test, but it will be useful to bring together here the various features which mutually enlighten and complete one another.

Towards the end of the first period of peace (220-250), on the eve of the Decian persecution, the Church was proud of its conquests, but at the same time it was anxious about them. Origen, in his books against Celsus, stressed the miraculous propagation of Christianity, and saw in it a proof of its divine power; but at the same date, speaking to Christians, he reminded them of the times

<sup>1</sup> Bibliography.—Same as for chs. xvi, xxiii, xxiv, xxvii.

of the persecutions, and lamented the decay of fervour.<sup>2</sup> St. Cyprian similarly recognised the weaknesses of the Christians of Carthage, and described these with a severe precision.<sup>3</sup>

### *Apostasies and Repentance*

When the persecution descended upon this half converted mass, the collapses, as we have seen,<sup>4</sup> were very numerous. Cyprian at Carthage and Dionysius at Alexandria described the multitudes of apostates:

Some were pale and trembling, not as people who were to offer sacrifice, but as if they were themselves to be sacrificed and immolated to idols. Thus, they were assailed by the mocking laughter of the numerous people around them, and it was manifest that they were frightened of everything, of dying as much as of offering sacrifice. Some others, nevertheless, ran forward to the altars in a resolute way, and protested with boldness that they had never been Christians. . . . The remainder either followed the bad example of one or other kind, or else they fled.<sup>5</sup>

Are we to say that these apostates had never been Christians? That would be too severe a judgment, contradicted by the sequel. For when the persecution ceased, these people returned to the Church, claiming or begging for pardon; they were given a penance lasting as long as they lived, and the majority submitted to this. Their faith had not been strong enough to enable them to overcome torments and accept death; but at least it was sincere enough to make pagan life intolerable to them, and to keep them to the end of their days at the doors of the Church, in a humble and severe spirit of penitence.

These apostasies and penances, then, reveal in a great number of Christians the weakness of a faith which was nevertheless sincere. What was thus revealed in the hard light of the persecutions had a less manifest effect on the Church during the long periods of calm. Thus Novatian, who in the days of Decius protested that "he no longer wanted to be a priest, because he had adopted an-

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 930.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Bk. III, p. 846.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Bk. III, p. 847.

<sup>5</sup> Dionysius, *apud* Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xli, 11-12.

other philosophy,"<sup>6</sup> would, after the persecution, arrange to be consecrated irregularly by three bishops, and set up his own chair against that of Cornelius.

### *The Religious Tendencies*

These weaknesses in faith, and the apostasies, schisms, and heresies which they provoked, can doubtless be explained by the infirmity of pagans who were laden with a heavy burden of heredity, and had been only imperfectly converted; but they also were in part caused by the evil influences which threatened Christians at that time, and by the religious tendencies which troubled them and sometimes led them astray. We will study here more closely these tendencies and their influence upon the Christian world of the third century.

### *Weakness of the Roman Empire*

If we consider, in the first place, the external circumstances in which the Church's action developed, we find a first danger threatening its unity. In the Apostolic age, the Roman world had been ruled by a powerful authority and had begun to enjoy the blessings of peace after lengthy upsets. For this it was grateful to the Empire as such, and this realisation of well-being lessened the regret for lost liberties. But in the period we have now reached, the Roman authority was discredited by reason of its abuses. The Empire, in the hands of strangers, or still more often, of unworthy adventurers, was now incapable of assuring the union of all the nations it had subjugated and which, in presence of its weakness, were becoming aware once more of their power. The Palmyrian affair is an example of this: certainly it lasted only ten years, but these ten years revealed to the East the weakness of the Roman edifice.

### *Divisions in the Church*

The Church also suffered from these divisions: the Origenist quarrel set up against the union between Alexandria, Rome and the West, the agreement of all the Oriental provinces, and thus

<sup>6</sup> Letter from Cornelius to Fabius of Antioch, in Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xliii, 16.

we already have an anticipation of the conflicts which will arise out of the Arian crisis. Even within the Western provinces themselves, national tendencies appeared, threatening the unity of the Empire and sometimes that of the Church: we find in Arnobius and Commodian <sup>7</sup> a hatred of Rome unknown to the early Africans, and one which will very soon give a strong support to the Donatist schism. It was also in the course of the third century that within the Church there began to arise Syriac or Coptic literatures, which were indeed instruments of propaganda, but also of emancipation: Hellenism thus lost its literary leadership, as Rome lost its political headship.

To keep together these divergent tendencies, the central authority had to tighten its hold; it did not fail to do so. The activity of Fabian, Cornelius, and Dionysius of Rome was directed in this sense, and showed itself to be effective.<sup>8</sup>

### *Threats of Schism*

In the Church itself, we find threats of schism more serious than in the first century when Christians were still only a "little flock," and when all those persecuted or even martyred by the Pagan society came closer together. Already at that early date, dissensions broke out occasionally, as at Corinth for instance between the followers of Paul, Cephas, Apollo, and those of Christ; forty years later some restless minds troubled once more this same Church of Corinth and refused to obey the presbyters. But these local quarrels were but brief and feverish outbursts which a letter of St. Paul or of St. Clement would pacify. At that time the Church, possessing neither wealth nor power, did not tempt either the cupidity of men or their ambition; and it was so closely knit together that it was not possible to make a schism therein without being expelled. But by the third century, the prestige of the Church was already so great that Decius saw in the Bishop of Rome a more formidable rival than any pretender to the Empire; and very ambitious Christians might hope to recruit a party from among the great and mingled masses of Christians. A contested election at that time or a disciplinary quarrel would be enough to lead to the organising of a little church such as that of Hippolytus or Novatian at Rome,

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *infra*, p. 1095.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *infra*, pp. 1122-1145.

or that of Felicissimus and Novatus at Carthage, or again that of Meletius in Egypt.

### *Unity of the Episcopate*

In face of these attacks, the whole episcopate ranged itself under the leadership of its heads, Cyprian of Carthage, Dionysius of Alexandria, and above all that of the Bishops of Rome, Fabian, Cornelius and Dionysius. Under the pressure of the danger present, the Christian brotherhood tightened its bonds; the bishops who were most jealous of their independence of action nevertheless appealed to a sovereign authority and requested its indispensable intervention. St. Cyprian wrote to St. Stephen: "You should write very plainly to our colleagues in the episcopate in Gaul, that they no longer allow the obstinate and proud Marcion to insult our college."<sup>9</sup> Thus these painful experiences themselves gave all the members of the Church a more lively consciousness of the unity of its government and the authority of its supreme head.

### *Doctrinal Controversies*

These schisms were often complicated by doctrinal controversies, which made the danger a more serious one. Already at the end of the apostolic age Christianity had to defend itself from the Gnostic heresies; but then, and throughout the second century, those who denied the baptismal faith openly abandoned the Church and founded sects. Towards the end of that century things were no longer the same: the Monarchianists and Adoptionists did not separate themselves from the Church as Marcion or Valentine had done; they claimed the right to remain within it, but to create schools which were in fact heresies. The clearest example of these pretensions is given in the history of Paul of Samosata, who mutilated doctrine at his will, but was determined to remain in the Church, and still more to remain Bishop of Antioch, long after he had already ceased to be a Christian. A first Council failed to evict him; his elusive dialectics were beyond the grasp of his judges and defied their condemnation for four years. Convicted at last of heresy, he was still obstinate, and it was necessary to have recourse to the Emperor Aurelian to expel him from his church. We have

<sup>9</sup> *Epist.*, lxxviii, 2.

a foretaste here of all the astuteness of the Arians, together with the efforts of Councils, often sterile, and the recourse to the Emperor—a remedy which was to prove even worse than the evil itself.

### *Influence of Philosophy*

In this new attitude on the part of the heretics, we must look for the influence of the religious philosophies of the time, and especially of the Idealist currents which tended to lead to the dissolution of beliefs. The Platonic ideas, which for Plato himself were not only determined in themselves but also the principle of every other determination, were at this time described thus by Apuleius: "These forms, which Plato calls ideas, are incomplete, and formless, being defined by no determination and no precise quality."<sup>10</sup> Under these influences, the Infinite can be regarded only as the Indeterminate; in this mist we lose all the clear and precise forms in which Greek thought took such delight. In many of those who separated from the great Church, the Christian Faith was dissolved into an atmosphere of dreams. Let us read once more, for instance, the strange passage in which, towards the end of the second century, Rhodon, the Catholic master of the Roman School, gives an account of his meeting with Apelles the Marcionite:

Apelles said to me that one ought not to expect a strict examination [of doctrine], but that each one ought to hold on to his faith. He considered, moreover, those who hope in the Crucified One will be saved, provided they are found in good works; he affirmed that for him the most obscure question was the question of God.

Marcion allowed the existence of two principles; other Marcionites distinguished three. Apelles, for his part, recognised only one. Why? asked Rhodon. Apelles gave this reply:

How it is that there is only one principle, I confess I do not know. But I feel myself led to affirm it.<sup>11</sup>

Those who hold this religious philosophy despair of attaining to truth by reason, but feel drawn to it by instinct. They themselves are satisfied by this sentiment, but it is felt to be incommunicable. They abandon the idea of imposing it upon anyone, or of making orthodoxy a condition of salvation.

<sup>10</sup> *De Platone*, i, 5. Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, p. 76.

<sup>11</sup> *Apud* Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, V, xiii, 5-7.



Such dispositions of mind were common to all the pagan world at that time. Men of culture had long since recognised the inanity of the common beliefs; they still accepted them, but only as symbols, in which their allegorical exegesis found a whole philosophy of nature.<sup>12</sup> This philosophy itself could take various forms in different thinkers. No one claimed thereby really to grasp the truth; at most one could hope to contemplate some reflections of it. The converts to Christianity who had been formed in this school did not always forget the lessons they had learnt; when they withdrew from the great Church and abandoned its authority, they treated Christian doctrine as they had previously treated the Mythologies or Hellenic philosophies. Thus, the Marcionites imagined two supreme principles, or one, or three, according to their particular religious taste; and in the Valentinian Gnostics imagination allowed itself full scope, giving rise to the æons of the *Ogdoad*, the *Decad*, and the *Dodecad*. Those who had once been charmed by the *Isis and Osiris* of Plutarch, or the *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius, would find in the Gnostic imaginings a less material form of intoxication in which their dreams would still be coloured by a reflection of Christianity. Certainly they had to renounce the firm assurance of the Christian Faith, but this assurance often appeared to them to be a slavery; the possession of the truth was to profound souls an inestimable treasure, but it was burdensome to more superficial minds who constantly dreamed of fresh enquiries, and whose frivolous curiosity could not long be captivated even by the word of a God. In times of persecution, the prospect of martyrdom roused men's souls from this intoxication, and made them realise, in face of death, the sublime gravity of the Christian Faith. But when the danger was passed, and pagan life, so threatening a little while before, was smiling once more upon its one-time enemies, and offering them merely its benevolent Syncretism, the temptation

<sup>12</sup> This allegorical exegesis is to be found in the Stoic philosophers, e.g. in Zeno and Chrysippus: *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta*, edited by J. von Arnim (Leipzig, 1903-1905), I (Zenonis), fr. 152-177; II (Chrysippi), fr. 1061-1100. The most interesting general work is the book of Cornutus, *Theologiæ græcæ compendium* (ed. C. Lang, Leipzig, 1881). Cornutus died about 68 A.D. He was therefore a contemporary of St. Paul. This exegesis has been often studied, e.g. by Decharme, *La Critique des traditions religieuses chez les Grecs*, Paris, 1904, pp. 270-355, and more briefly in Lebreton, *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. I, pp. 33-43. We know that Porphyry accused Origen of borrowing from the Greeks their allegorical method in order to apply it to the Jewish Scriptures (*apud* Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xix, 8, quoted above, p. 933).

was great to accept these deceptive imitations, and to regard Christianity as just one religion like the others—higher, no doubt, and purer, but itself capable of change, capable of adapting itself to any alliance, and abandoning that intransigence which no pagan could either tolerate or even understand.

### *The Faith*

In presence of this shallow instability, the Church repeated once more her confession of faith: "We for our part have no need of curiosity after Jesus Christ, nor of research after the Gospel. Once we believe, we have no need to believe anything further. For the first article of our faith is that there is nothing more we ought to believe."<sup>13</sup>

These peremptory declarations were supported by a whole theology concerning the Church and her doctrinal authority. Scripture, Tradition, all the sources of Christian doctrine, belong to the Church; it is the Church that ensures their integrity and interprets their meaning. The teaching she gives is "a precious deposit, enclosed in an excellent vessel; the Spirit constantly rejuvenates it, and communicates its youth to the vessel containing it. . . . For where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God; and where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church and all grace; and the Spirit is truth."<sup>14</sup> Every reader must admire the depth and clarity of these theses of Irenæus; but we can better grasp their imperative force when we contrast them with the dissolving sophisms of the Gnostics.

### *Rationalism*

This Christian faith does not consist merely of obedience to the authority of the Church and to God's Revelation; it implies in the first place a love of this religious truth, so dear to Christians that they are ready to die for it. Here again we find a new conflict of ideas between the Church and the world it had to conquer. In Hellenic and Roman circles, so proud of their culture, we find not only an easy-going Syncretism, or a superficial idealism which amuses itself with its dreams; we find also a keen and firm Rational-

<sup>13</sup> Tertullian, *De præscriptione*, vii, 12-13.

<sup>14</sup> Irenæus, *Adv. hæc.*, III, xxiv, 1, text quoted in Bk. III, p. 678.

ism, for which the Christian mystery can be only a chimera. It is this Rationalism which at the end of the third century underlies the polemics of Porphyry;<sup>15</sup> and throughout this whole century it endeavours to lead Christians astray, and to shake the edifice of its dogma in whole or in part.

We recognise it easily in the Adoptionists refuted by Hippolytus; they are willing to admit only that which can be demonstrated "by a conjunctive or a disjunctive syllogism; leaving aside the holy Scriptures, they apply themselves to geometry"; they put themselves in the school of Euclid, Aristotle, Theophrastus, or Galen; they mutilate the Scriptures under pretext of correcting them; or instead of taking the trouble to falsify them, they completely reject the Law and the Prophets.<sup>16</sup>

### *First Attempts at Biblical Criticism*

The Marcionites had blazed the trail in this matter. Marcion indeed does not seem to have been in any way a Rationalist: his fierce and impassioned Christianity claimed to be superior to the faith of the great Church both in elevation and requirements. But by rejecting the Old Testament he had been obliged to criticise it, and this criticism became in him, and still more in his disciples, a school of Rationalism.<sup>17</sup> The method which all these heretics employed against the Old Testament was the same as that which Porphyry was to utilise against the Gospel. Neglecting the religious significance of the facts, they presented them as improbable stories, or if not, as ordinary happenings which they made the subject of their criticism. Despoiled of its divine character, and covered with sarcasm, the Bible became for those who followed them nothing but a collection of myths and legends.

Hence arose, especially in the East and outside the great Church, timid attempts to distinguish in the Pentateuch the divine element from what was merely a human work. Thus Ptolemy, the disciple of Valentine, in his *Letter to Flora*, distinguished in the Law three

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Bk. III, p. 889.

<sup>16</sup> Quoted by Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, V, xxviii, 13-19. Cf. Bk. III, p. 728.

<sup>17</sup> On this Rationalistic criticism of the Old Testament by the Marcionites, see an interesting study by A. Marmorstein, *The Background of the Haggadah*, in *Hebrew Union College Annual*, Cincinnati, 1929, pp. 141-204, and, especially pp. 150-183, on anti-Marcionite Apologetics. We have indicated above (p. 969) Origen's reaction against this tendency.

different sources: God, Moses, and the elders; the redactor of the *Clementine Homilies* affirmed that Moses wrote nothing, and that the Law, drawn up after his death by the elders, had been mingled with dangerous additions.<sup>18</sup> Some have regarded these reveries as the first attempts at Biblical Criticism, and these ancient heretics have been looked upon as forerunners. But that is an honour which they do not deserve: their hypotheses were not the results of scientific researches; but merely expedients invented in order to save something of the Old Testament.

If such conjectures were entertained, in spite of the fact that there was nothing either in the Jewish or the Christian tradition which prepared the way for them, it was because the gravity of the danger present was realised, and in the communities which had already separated from the great Church,<sup>19</sup> it was met in any way possible. Towards the year 210, Tertullian wrote: "Nowadays in all countries we have more followers than the Marcionites."<sup>20</sup> This numerical preponderance seems to be regarded by him as the end of a process. Hence it would seem that towards the end of the second century the situation had been less favourable, and that, in certain lands at least, the heresy which rejected the whole of the Old Testament had at least as many adherents as Catholic orthodoxy. This striking expansion of Marcionism is shown again by the manifold and persevering efforts of Catholic apologists, comprising the greatest theologians. It has been said that the works of Irenæus were wholly directed against Marcion, and the same might be said of the works of Origen.

### *The Catholic Resistance*

These efforts were not in vain: to Irenæus the Church owes the fruitful conception of the progressive education of humanity, prepared gradually from the time of Adam, through the patriarchs and prophets, for the Incarnation of the Son of God, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and finally for the Vision of God which will be the inheritance of the elect. Origen in his turn showed that the prophets were privileged witnesses of God, who, "after being pre-

<sup>18</sup> On all this, cf. above, p. 1002.

<sup>19</sup> In Catholic circles, these radical criticisms do not appear; nevertheless the distinction we have noticed in the *Didascalia* between the Law and the *Deuterostis* would seem to result from the same preoccupations; cf. above, pp. 1003-1004.

<sup>20</sup> *Adversus Marcionem*, V, xx. Cf. Harnack, *Marcion*, p. 206.

pared thereto by figures, arrived at the contemplation of the truth.”<sup>21</sup>

The method of allegorical exegesis to which this led in Alexandria doubtless had its exaggerations, but it rendered services which we must not overlook: it turned away men's minds from the rationalistic literalism of the Jews, and above all of the Marcionites.<sup>22</sup>

## § 2. THE LACK OF HARMONY BETWEEN THE POPULAR FAITH AND LEARNED THEOLOGY<sup>1</sup>

In the various conflicts we have just described, we have witnessed the victorious reaction of the Church in face of attacks and invasion by pagan life and thought. But we must now consider a danger, less grave in appearance, but yet very real, which arose in the third century through the lack of harmony we have several times mentioned between popular faith and learned theology. We shall do well to consider this once again, and study its origin and bearing.

### *The Requirements of the Elite*

The problem we are considering here is one which presents itself at all times. In the third century it was rendered more dangerous by the rapid expansion of the Church in the pagan world. The new recruits who flocked to her in such great numbers had been accustomed in the pagan religions to progressive initiations which separated the *élite* from the masses. In Greco-Roman paganism, the old myths were interpreted by philosophers as allegorical symbols of their own doctrines; the mystery religions led their disciples step by step to the last degree in which they were permitted to witness the secret rites. Gnosticism, in its various

<sup>21</sup> In *Joann.*, VI, iii, 15. Cf. Zoellig, *Die Inspirationslehre des Origenes*, pp. 44-48. As so often happens in Origen, this admiration for the prophets is sometimes carried to extremes: the prophets are represented as incarnate angels: *In Mt.*, xii, 30; cf. Huet, in his note on this passage, and *Origeniana*, II, ii, 5, 24.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. above, p. 969.

<sup>1</sup> We have studied this lack of harmony in more detail in the *Revue d'Histoire ecclésiastique*, Vols. XIX and XX, 1923 and 1924, pp. 481-505 and 5-37. Some points in the present chapter are taken from these articles, and others from an article published in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XII, 1922, pp. 265-296, on *Les degrés de la connaissance religieuse, d'après Origène*.

forms, was conceived according to the same plan: over and above the elements common to religion it added secret revelations introducing a few privileged souls to profound secrets which the common folk would never know.

The new converts to Christianity had experienced the attraction of such dreams; they had abjured the illusions of their paganism or Gnosticism; but instinctively many of them sought from the Church what they had always sought elsewhere: a religious knowledge worthy of their secular knowledge. Was this a claim resulting from pride, or a legitimate ambition? That was the great problem which Origen discussed in the Preface to his fifth tome on *St. John*. Addressing himself to his friend Ambrose, who had formerly fallen away into Gnosticism, he reminds him of the seduction which had then led him astray. This was not just intellectual ambition alone, but still more "the love of Jesus, which cannot suffer an unreasoned and vulgar faith."<sup>2</sup>

### *Mistrust of Learning by the Simple*

But while some particular minds felt this need and made such claims upon theologians, simple folk often became alarmed, seeing in all this knowledge nothing but idle words and in all these researches merely temerity.<sup>3</sup> We must not be too hard on their timidity, and we must bear in mind that every day they saw Gnosticism erecting some new construction, which soon collapsed with a great noise. Alarmed at these ruins, in which souls were perishing, many drew away, repeating that "one ought not to get mixed up either with philosophy or with dialectics, nor even to apply oneself to the study of the universe; what they aimed at was just the faith, pure and simple."<sup>4</sup>

### *Attitude of St. Irenæus*

Tertullian expressed these sentiments in his sonorous and imperious language, but his exaggeration led him to miss the mark by

<sup>2</sup> In *Joann.*, v, 8. This text has been quoted above, p. 934.

<sup>3</sup> Origen often complains of this, as does Clement. He writes thus in a homily on the *Psalms*: "Amongst other faults, the ignorant have this detestable one that they regard as vain and useless those who apply themselves to the ministry of the word and of teaching; they esteem their own ignorance more than the study and labours of masters, and altering the value of words, they call these exercises in verbiage, and they call their own uncultivated ignorance simplicity" (In *Psalms.*, xxxvi, *hom.*, v, 1).

<sup>4</sup> Clement, *Stromata*, I, ix, 43, 1.

overshooting it.<sup>5</sup> St. Irenæus was wiser when he first reminded those theologians who had no patience with research, of the inviolable unity of the Christian Faith, and then revealed to them an immense field of studies, namely, all the depth of the riches of the knowledge and the wisdom of God, which St. Paul never wearied of contemplating, and to which he had directed his disciples.<sup>6</sup> These problems were never regarded by St. Irenæus as matters of ambitious speculation such as those which aroused the curiosity of the Gnostics; they were religious mysteries, which God has revealed to man through love, and which are perceived only by man when he is raised up towards God by charity.<sup>7</sup> Thus, considering Christian theology as a whole in its relations with charity, Irenæus writes:

It is better to know nothing and to be ignorant of the cause of all that exists, provided one believes in God and perseveres in his love, rather than to be puffed up by this knowledge and fall away from this love which makes us live; it is better to leave all other scientific research and know only Jesus Christ, the Son of God crucified for us, rather than be led into impiety by subtleties and details of questions.<sup>8</sup>

Every Christian, if the question be put in this way, would answer it as does Irenæus, putting in the first rank of Christians the simple believers who know only Jesus Christ and him crucified. But the theologians of Alexandria put the question in quite another way, and accordingly give a different answer.

### *Different Attitude of Clement of Alexandria*

At Alexandria, in fact, we find a diversity of tendencies still more than in the West: high speculations seem to the simple to be a temerarious enterprise, while the theologians for their part are inclined to regard the faith of the simple as insufficient for one who aims at Christian perfection.

To understand this properly, we must remember what it is that distinguished the Alexandrine "gnosis," as found in Catholics like

<sup>5</sup> *De præscriptione*, vii and xii. Cf. Bk. III, p. 826.

<sup>6</sup> *Adversus hæreses*, I, x, 2-3. Cf. Bk. III, pp. 668-669.

<sup>7</sup> On the theory of religious knowledge according to St. Irenæus, cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 534-539.

<sup>8</sup> *Adversus hæreses*, II, xxvi, 1. This passage, the conclusion of which alone is recalled here, has been quoted in Bk. III, p. 673.

Clement and Origen, from theological speculation as we find it for instance in Tertullian, Hippolytus or Novatian. This Alexandrine gnosis is not a purely human science, born of the efforts of the theologian; it is a higher religious knowledge, an intuition which initiates the one who enjoys it into mysteries forbidden to the masses; it transforms his moral and religious life, draws him out of the servile condition common to all other men, and makes him a privileged friend of God, equal or even superior to the angels.

Such pretensions wounded simple Christians in that which was most dear to them; they might agree that they were less learned than their masters, but not that they were to be held at a distance, as Christians of a second order, relegated, throughout their lifetime and perhaps also for eternity, far from Christ and far from God. On the other hand, the "gnostics" who found their privilege contested, were indignant that any should seek to take from them not only the prestige of human science, but also the intimacy of special revelations.

These ideas and the conflicts to which they gave rise can already be perceived in the few fragments which we possess of Clement's predecessors. Here we find the opposition between the gnostics and the believers:

I know that the mysteries of gnosis lead to pleasantries on the part of the majority of people, especially when they are not covered by a learned symbolism; but for some, on the other hand, they are as a light which is suddenly introduced in the midst of a banquet in a dark room: first it dazzles them, then they become accustomed to it, then they conform themselves to it, and exercise themselves in it, trembling and exulting with joy [they praise?] <sup>9</sup> the Lord.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> There is a word missing here.

<sup>10</sup> *Eclog.*, 35. These fragments have been studied especially by P. Collomp, *Une source de Clement d'Alexandrie et des homélies pseudo-clémentines*, in *Revue de Philologie*, Vol. XXXVII, 1913, pp. 19-46, and in more detail by Bousset, *Judisch-christlicher Schulbetrieb in Alexandria und Rom*, pp. 155-271. The *Excerpta ex Theodoto* have been edited and commented with great care by R. P. Casey, London, 1934. The comparison made here between this revelation and a sudden illumination is inspired by the mysteries, and is often found at that time, e.g. in Apuleius, *De deo Socratis*: "It is, in the midst of the most profound darkness, the instantaneous brilliance of a strong light." Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 79 and 30. In the fragments close to the one quoted above, other traces of this gnosticism are to be found, and especially in *Eclogæ*, 27; cf. *Excerpta*, 27. These passages are quoted in the *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique*, art. cit., pp. 493-495.



These mutilated texts, gathered more or less by chance from Clement's notes, do not determine with certitude the position of his predecessors; but at least they give us some idea of it, and further, the fact of their insertion in these collections shows the interest which Clement took in them himself.<sup>11</sup> At the same time, the master of the Catechetical School did not give himself up unreservedly to these gnostic aspirations, the danger of which he recognised. In the first five *Stromata* and in the *Pædagogus*, this reserve is particularly noticeable: Gnosis is praised, but as a perfection to which all the faithful can and ought to attain; faith already contains its seed, and one can therefore say that already from the time of his baptism a Christian is perfect.<sup>12</sup> But when Clement was persecuted under Severus and had to leave Alexandria and his school, he allowed himself to be led by his aspirations to a life free from passion, fixed in a perpetual contemplation, and raised above the common level of humanity. It is then that we find once more in his works, and sometimes not without exaggeration and bitterness, the opposition between the believer and the gnostic: the one grasps only the letter of religion, the other the spirit; the former reaches the symbols, but the latter the realities.<sup>13</sup> The source of this privileged knowledge is sometimes represented as a secret tradition entrusted by Christ to the apostles and transmitted by them to certain privileged persons.<sup>14</sup> The initiates, or "gnostics," aware that they possess religious truths to which ordinary people cannot attain, will adopt towards them an attitude of condescension, accommodating themselves to their customs, and performing symbolical actions which are unnecessary for themselves, though necessary for the others. This is the lesson which, according to Clement, we learn from the conduct of St. Paul, who became all things to all men and circumcised Timothy.<sup>15</sup> We shall find the same theory in Origen, confirmed by the same examples.

To this privileged Christian, who has passed by a second conversion from faith to gnosis,<sup>16</sup> is attributed by Clement all the perfections which the Stoics gave to their wise man. He possesses

<sup>11</sup> On the Valentinian doctrine and Clement's theology as shown in these collections of notes, cf. R. P. Casey, *Excerpta ex Theodoto*, especially pp. 5-38.

<sup>12</sup> *Pædagogus*, I, xxv and xxvi; cf. Bk. III, p. 903.

<sup>13</sup> *Strom.*, VI, xv, 131-132.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, vii, 61, 1; *Hypotyposes*, in Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, II, 1, Cf. Bk. III, p. 918.

<sup>15</sup> *Strom.*, VI, xv, 124; VII, ix, 53.

<sup>16</sup> On this second conversion, cf. Bk. III, p. 919.

perfect knowledge and virtue, he knows all things, attains to all things and understands all things. Every one of his actions is rectitude itself; he no longer has any passion; transfigured into God he prays to him without ceasing; his life is a perpetual festival. He is an apostle, he is a priest, he belongs not only to the *élite*, but to the real hierarchy of the Church.<sup>17</sup>

The life of eternity will consecrate this transcendent and isolated perfection: in heaven as on earth, the gnostic and the believer are separated; they do not belong to the same flock and do not live in the same dwelling. Here below, every action of a "gnostic" is perfect, and every action of a believer intermediate;<sup>18</sup> similarly in the next world "the fact that one is simply saved is one of the intermediate things, to be saved as one ought to be is perfection," to which the "gnostic" alone attains. For the believer, his consciousness of his inferior beatitude will be an eternal pain, and the severest of all.<sup>19</sup>

Lastly, we notice in this mysticism of Clement a total absence of suffering or of purifying trials. In this respect again it resembles neo-Platonism, and in particular, the mysticism of Plotinus. Prayer itself certainly develops in the life of the "gnostic," but it appears little or not at all in its preparation. It seems that one is raised to this life by ascetical effort and dialectics.<sup>20</sup> Certainly these features

<sup>17</sup> *Strom.*, VI, viii, 65-68, 70-79; VII, x, 55-59.

<sup>18</sup> This distinction is based on the Stoic classification of moral values: the action of the just man is perfectly right; that of the wicked man is evil; between the two we have the action of the ordinary man who carries out his duty, and this is called "intermediate": Cicero, *Acad. post.*, I, xxxvii; *De finibus*, III, lviii; IV, lvi; cf. J. von Arnim, *Stoicorum fragmenta*, Vol. I, p. 55; Vol. III, pp. 134 *et seq.*

<sup>19</sup> *Strom.*, VI, xiv, 108-114; cf. Bk. III, p. 919. This theory of the heavenly dwellings, divided from one another by an abyss, is found again in other passages in Clement: *Strom.*, IV, xv-xviii, 97-114; VII, x, 55-59.

<sup>20</sup> This effort is thus described in a passage in which the stages of the mystical ascent are likened to the initiations into the Mysteries: "Not unreasonably the Mysteries begin among the Greeks with lustrations, as among the barbarians by a bath; then there are the lesser Mysteries, which have the character of an instruction, a preparation for what is to come next; in the great Mysteries, which are concerned with the whole universe, there is nothing more to learn, but one has to behold and comprehend nature and reality. For us, lustration is confession; the witnessing of the final ceremony is the analysis by which we advance towards the First Intelligence, starting with the analysis of the being subordinated to it, disengaging bodies from their natural properties, taking out the dimension of depth, then that of breadth, and then that of length; what remains is, so to speak, a monad, occupying a certain place; if we suppress this place, we have the Intelligible Monad. If then, separating from bodies and from things called

are not the only ones: an important place is given to Christ as revealer and master, and this is sufficient to make us recognise that this mysticism is authentically Christian, and not merely Hellenic in character. Even so, this Christian character is strongly impregnated by a proud Hellenism which is not very evangelical. We are far removed from St. Paul, who asks: "Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world?";<sup>21</sup> we are far from Christ, for Jesus thanked his Father because he had hidden his secrets from the wise and prudent, and had revealed them to little ones.<sup>22</sup> According to Clement, on the contrary, it is to the wise and prudent that Christ has revealed them.<sup>23</sup>

### *Origen*

In Origen we find the same aspirations as in Clement, the same intense desire for contemplation and knowledge,<sup>24</sup> together with the same impatience with the inadequacies and narrowness of an ignorant faith. But in Origen these aspirations are more under control: Clement was still a philosopher even when he became a Christian and a priest; Origen was born a Christian and was the son of a martyr; he devoted his whole life to the study of the Scriptures; he was before all a churchman, an exegete; his preaching, which was always assiduous and towards the end of his life a daily event, kept him in contact with the Christian populace. These constant and profound influences prevented him from isolating himself in his ivory tower and giving himself up there to a dream of a peaceful life, free from all human infirmities and separated from the world and its miseries. But on the other hand, his bold and occasionally rash speculations attacked Christian doctrine more directly, inasmuch as that doctrine was more continuously present

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incorporeal all the qualities which inhere in them, we precipitate ourselves into the greatness of Christ, and then by sanctity advance into the abyss, we shall arrive in some way at the understanding of the Almighty, understanding not what he is, but what he is not" (*Strom.*, V, xi, 70, 7).

<sup>21</sup> *I Cor.* i, 20.

<sup>22</sup> *Matt.* xi, 25.

<sup>23</sup> *Strom.*, VI, xv, 115, 1.

<sup>24</sup> Among the many texts, we may quote this comment on *Psalms* xxvi, 6: "As long as I am on earth, says the psalmist, if I must renounce many goods, I make at least one request. For as it is impossible to enjoy all goods in abundance, at least let this good be not lacking to me, this great and excellent good which I see."

to his thought. We have already set forth his speculations, their attractiveness and their danger, and we need not return to them here. We wish merely to show how Origen understood the reciprocal relations between learned theology and the popular faith.

The faith of the simple has as its central object Jesus Christ crucified. That is certainly a salutary knowledge, but it is elementary; it is the "milk for babes"; the mercy of God sets it forth, in the absence of something better, to those who are still too weak to ascend higher and "know God in the wisdom of God."<sup>25</sup> Accordingly, we are not surprised to find Origen, in another passage in the *Contra Celsum*, defending this faith of the simple as being, not absolutely the best, but the best possible, in view of the weakness of those to whom it has to be proposed. He grants that some favoured minds may not be satisfied with it, but these can pass beyond it and ascend higher, without going outside Christianity.<sup>26</sup>

Accordingly, he severely criticises Celsus for claiming "to know everything" about Christianity, whereas he has grasped only the elements. We might just as well think we understand the religion of the Egyptians because we have heard the myths narrated by the common people, though we have never met an Egyptian priest or received from him an initiation into the mysteries. Origen adds:

What I have said of the Egyptians, their wise men and their ignorant people, might also be said of the Persians. With them also, there are initiations which are interpreted reasonably by the learned among them, and carried out symbolically by the common folk. Again we might say the same of the Syrians, Indians, and all those who possess myths and sacred books.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup> As often happens in Origen, an association of ideas was formed in his mind between the text of St. Paul concerning Jesus Christ crucified, and the elementary catechism, just as he accustomed himself to regard the Corinthians as the type of ordinary Christians: *In Joannem*, I, vii, 43; I, ix, 58; I, xviii, 107; II, iii, 29; II, iii, 33; XIX, xi, 68; *Contra Celsum*, II, lxvi; *Periarchon*, IV, iv, 31.

<sup>26</sup> *Contra Celsum*, III, lxxix. This text has been quoted and commented on above, p. 965, n. 44.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, I, xii. It would be a serious error and a grave injustice to Origen to accuse him, on the basis of this text, of having attributed to all these initiations the same truth: the faith of the simple contains nothing that is not true (*Contra Celsum*, III, lxxix; cf. *supra*, p. 965), and in this way it differs from all these superstitions which he abhors; but even so he finds one feature common to Christianity and the pagan Mysteries: the progressive initiations by which Christians, like the disciples of the pagan religions, must advance step by step until they arrive at an intimate knowledge of their Mysteries.

*His Theological Position*

This apologetic reasoning already makes known the theological position of Origen. We find it set forth in greater detail in his *Commentary on St. John*: beyond the knowledge which the ordinary Christian possesses, there is a privileged initiation, to which only the few chosen ones can aspire:

Just as the Law set forth the shadow of the future good things which were to be manifested by that Law which is announced in truth, so also the Gospel, which ordinary people think they understand, teaches the shadow of the mysteries of Christ. But the eternal Gospel, of which John speaks, and which may properly be called the spiritual Gospel, presents clearly, to those who understand, all that concerns the Son of God and the mysteries revealed in his discourses, and the realities of which his actions were the symbols.<sup>28</sup>

These distinctions appear with particular clearness in our knowledge of the Word of God: ordinary Christians see only his humiliations; but the spiritual ones contemplate his divine glory. Hence we have this distinction between classes of men: in the first rank we have those "who participate in the Logos who was from the beginning, who was with God, the Logos God"; in the second rank we have those "who know only Jesus Christ and him crucified, thinking that the Logos made flesh is the whole of the Logos; they know Christ only according to the flesh; such are the masses of those regarded as believers."<sup>29</sup> Or, as is said elsewhere, "the Logos, for those who are still in the stage of preparatory teaching, has the form of a servant, so that they may say: 'We have seen him, and he has neither form nor beauty'; while for the perfect, he comes in the glory of his Father, and they may say: 'We have seen his glory, the glory such as an only son receives from his father, full of grace and truth'; and this cannot be understood by one who has need of the folly of preaching in order to believe."<sup>30</sup>

This gradation of revelations and beliefs is not without danger: it lowers the mystery of the Cross, and compromises the unity of Christian people. The perfect, the "true adorers," become isolated

<sup>28</sup> *In Joannem*, I, vii, 43.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, II, iii, 27-31. Origen adds two other categories: in the third rank we have the Greek philosophers; in the fourth, "those who have given belief to wholly corrupting and atheistic discourses."

<sup>30</sup> *In Mt.*, xii, 30.

in the Church in the midst of the simple folk, the "Jews" or "people of Jerusalem";<sup>31</sup> applying to themselves, not without conceit, the tactics of St. Paul, they "become Jews to win the Jews," they lend themselves to symbolical actions to deliver those who are subject to symbols."<sup>32</sup> The aim is excellent, but the method is dangerous; there is room to fear on the one hand a disdain which is too similar to pharisaism, and on the other, a condescension which tends to be insincere. We get the same impression in reading this other passage:

Peter and Paul, who at first were plainly Jews and circumcised, afterwards received from Jesus the grace to be such in secret.<sup>33</sup> They were Jews ostensibly for the salvation of the majority; not only did they confess it by their words, but they also manifested it by their actions. We must say the same of their Christianity. And just as Paul could not assist the Jews according to the flesh, unless, when it was reasonable, he cut his hair and made his offering—unless in other words he became a Jew for the sake of the Jews, in order to gain the Jews—so also he who devotes himself to the salvation of many cannot give efficacious help by secret Christianity to those who are still in the elements of ordinary Christianity, or make them better, or lead them to what is more perfect and higher. Hence Christianity must be both spiritual and corporal; and when we have to announce the corporal Gospel and say that we know nothing amongst the carnal save Jesus Christ and him crucified, we must do so. But when we find them perfected by the Spirit and bearing in themselves fruit, and in love with heavenly wisdom, we must communicate to them the discourse which ascends from the Incarnation to that which was with God.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>31</sup> "Those who, by their moral dispositions, have become equal to the angels, will not adore the Father in Jerusalem, but they will adore better than those of Jerusalem although, because of the latter, they have to live among those of Jerusalem, having become Jews for the Jews in order to gain the Jews. When someone no longer adores either on the mountain, or at Jerusalem, the hour has at last come when he has become a son, and adores the Father in freedom" (*In Joann.*, XIII, xvi, 98).

<sup>32</sup> "It may happen that the true adorer, he who adores in spirit and in truth, may lend himself to symbolical actions, in order gently to deliver those who are subject to symbols, and enable them to pass from symbols to the truth: Paul seems to have acted in this way in the case of Timothy, and perhaps also at Cenchræ and Jerusalem" (*Ibid.*, xviii, 109-111).

<sup>33</sup> Origen here is alluding to *Rom.* ii, 29. This text, the sense of which incidentally he falsifies, is one of those he quotes most frequently in support of his theory of a higher and secret Christianity: *In Joann.*, I, i, 1; I, xxv, 259; XIII, xvii, 103; *Fragm.*, 8 and 114; *Periarch.*, IV, iii, 6; IV, ii, 5; *In Jerem. hom.*, xii, 12; *Contra Celsum*, VII, xxii.

<sup>34</sup> *In Joann.*, I, vii, 43.

Though Paul, out of condescension to the weakness of the Corinthians, preached to them only ordinary Christianity, Jesus Christ and him crucified, he revealed more divine mysteries to more worthy disciples. Origen thus often contrasts the Corinthians with the Ephesians: the former are for him the type of ordinary Christians, while the latter are the spiritual ones. And superior even to the Ephesians, there were certain chosen disciples who were capable of supporting the weight of the highest revelations, such as Timothy and Luke, to whom, according to Origen, Paul communicated the unspeakable words which he heard when he was caught up to the third heaven.<sup>35</sup>

In virtue of this hypothesis, some doctrines were introduced into the Church which the official tradition has always repudiated, and in particular, belief in reincarnation and in the transmigration of souls. Clement had rejected this, but Origen accepted it; he presented it as a doctrine reserved for perfect Christians, revealed to them by allegory under the letter of Scripture.<sup>36</sup>

This conception of allegory is characteristic of Alexandria: we find it already in Philo;<sup>37</sup> it is asserted in Clement, and developed in Origen. Other writers of the school, Clement for instance, Gregory

<sup>35</sup> In *Josue hom.*, xxiii, 4. This passage has been quoted above, p. 962.

<sup>36</sup> In *Joann.*, XX, vii, 50-53; XIX, xiii-xiv, 79-88; In *Ephes.*, i, 17 (ed. J. A. F. Gregg, in *Journal of Theol. Studies*, Vol. III, p. 399); vi, 13 (*ibid.*, p. 572; cf. In *Luc. hom.*, XXIII).

<sup>37</sup> E. Bréhier (*Les Idées philosophiques et religieuses de Philon d'Alexandrie*, pp. 39-41) shows how the Alexandrians—first the neo-Pythagoricians, and then Philo—transformed the nature of allegory. For them it was no longer only an auxiliary method, but an indispensable instrument in the search for the truth; we understand how, in this view, religious truth has to be hidden under symbols, and is revealed only to a few privileged souls, either by initiation into the Mysteries, or by allegory. "The comparing of the allegorical initiation with initiation into the Mysteries, though not frequent, is found in Philo, as in the Cebes tableau. His very conception of truth as hidden beneath allegory is not without relation to that of the Mysteries. Truth must be communicated only to a small number, and with precautions; the ears of the profane would not be able to contain it. The wise man must therefore not unveil the truth to all, but he will dissemble, out of piety and humanity. Those who are not willing to allow the allegorical method are not only fools, but also impious." M. Bréhier mentions the following texts: *De Cherubim*, xlvi; *De sacr. Abel et Cain*, lxxi; *Quæst. in Gen.*, IV, xlvi, 299; cxiii, 341; clxviii, 374; *De mut. nom.*, lx, lxi, lxii. All these features, with the exception of deceiving, are found also in Origen: he likewise regards allegory as an initiation into the highest religious truths; for him also the opponents of the allegorical method are not merely short-sighted exegetes who do not properly understand the Scripture, but also impious people who mutilate the Christian religion.

Thaumaturgus or Dionysius of Alexandria, are less dependent upon the Scriptures, and develop more freely their own metaphysical speculations. Allegory is less indispensable for them; Origen, however, is and wishes to be, above all, an exegete; it is in Scripture that he finds all truth; to discover it there, he requires this mystic key;<sup>38</sup> hence those who try to take Scripture from his hands are impious; he speaks in indignant tones about them, and in his words we have not only an exegete defending his method, but above all a religious mind protecting what is most sacred to it.<sup>39</sup>

### *The Question of Prayer*

These aspirations towards a higher and purer religion reserved for a select few differentiate, as we have seen, the speculations of theologians from the faith of the simple, opposing an allegorical to the literal exegesis; on prayer likewise these aspirations leave their impress.

Christ by his example and precepts taught his apostles to pray to the heavenly Father; he also prescribed to them prayer in his own name. The Church has remained faithful to this divine institution: liturgical prayer is addressed usually to the Father through the Son; she thus worships the heavenly Father, source and principle of all good, and the Son, our Saviour and Mediator. But even so, the Church does not hesitate to offer to the Father and to the Son the same prayer, the same adoration, and the same worship, either by uniting the two Persons (or the three) in a common formula, or else by addressing the Son alone in the same terms she uses when addressing the Father. These prayers and hymns appear from the beginning of the Church, and have always remained in use.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Gregory Thaumaturgus, *Discourse of Thanksgiving*, xv, 176-178; *Letter from Origen to Gregory*, iv; *Scholia xx on the Apocalypse*, ed. Harnack, p. 29.

<sup>39</sup> For instance, in his first *Homily on Leviticus*, after objecting to the literal school that if we listen to them, we would have to offer sacrifices, immolate oxen and lambs, he continues: "But it is time for us to apply against these impious old men (*impious presbyteros*) the words of St. Suzanna . . . : 'I am straightened on every side, for if I do this thing it is death to me, and if I do it not, I shall not escape your hands. But it is better for me to fall into your hands without doing it, than to sin in the sight of the Lord.' We will expose ourselves, then, if it be necessary, to your attacks, but only in order that the Church, turning towards Christ the Lord, may recognise the truth of the word of God hidden beneath the veil of the letter." We see that fidelity to the allegorical interpretation is for Origen a religious duty of supreme importance, a question of life or death.



Though rare in the official liturgy, they are very frequent in the daily hymns and prayers of Christians, in preaching, and especially in the Acts of the martyrs, beginning with the martyrdom of St. Stephen immediately after the death of Jesus.<sup>40</sup>

Origen was aware of this custom of the faithful, but he condemned it in his treatise *On Prayer*: "In their excessive simplicity, some foolishly err, for want of consideration and attention: they pray to the Son either with the Father or without the Father."<sup>41</sup> The argument he brings forward against this practice is that "if we wish to pray well, we must not pray to him who himself prays." This argument is far reaching: in his books against Celsus Origen invokes it in order to condemn the worship of the stars;<sup>42</sup> here he uses it to condemn prayers addressed to Christ. In both cases the aim is the same, to reserve supreme worship to the supreme God. Accordingly, Origen considers the objection based on the text: "let all the angels of God adore him." He allows that this refers to Christ, but at the same time he maintains that this adoration must not be understood in the proper but in a metaphorical sense, like the adoration of the Church or of Jerusalem in the text of Isaias he goes on to mention.<sup>43</sup> His whole aim is to show that the Son of God gives worship to his Father, and that, accordingly, our adoration should not be directed to Christ, but through him to his Father.<sup>44</sup> And if the Son of God gives worship to the Father, this is not only because he has become man: Origen represents the Word of God and the Holy Spirit as giving a cult of adoration to God the Father in heaven; they are, according to him, allegorically figured by the two animals of Habacuc, and by the two seraphim of Isaias which sing: Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts.<sup>45</sup> Philo had seen in these two angels the two supreme powers;<sup>46</sup> Origen transfers this

<sup>40</sup> Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 174-247.

<sup>41</sup> *Treatise on Prayer*, xv-xvi. Cf. *Revue d'histoire ecclési.*, Vol. XX, 1924, pp. 19-24; G. Bardy, *La Vie spirituelle d'après les Pères des trois premiers siècles*, Paris, 1935, pp. 254-255.

<sup>42</sup> *Contra Celsum*, V, xi. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>43</sup> *Treatise on Prayer*, xv, 3.

<sup>44</sup> It is in the same sense that he says in the text of *Contra Celsum* mentioned above: "We think that the sun and the moon and the other stars pray to the supreme God through his Son, and we consider in consequence that one ought not to pray to them, for they themselves pray."

<sup>45</sup> *Periarchon*, I, iii, 4; *In Isaiam hom.*, I, 2.

<sup>46</sup> Previous to Origen, we find this adoration of the Father by the Lord and the "angel of the Spirit" in the *Ascension of Isaias*, ix. This chapter was written by a Christian about the year 150. Here again we recognise the influence of a

interpretation to the Son and the Holy Spirit: that is because he is here still under the influence of Alexandrian Judaism, and is adopting its conception of intermediate cults.<sup>47</sup> The subordinationist theology of Origen will in its turn have its influence on some Eastern liturgical texts of the fourth century, and particularly on the *Apostolic Constitutions*.<sup>48</sup>

This influence, indeed, will not be able to stop the irresistible current of adoration and prayer which carries Christians towards Christ; Origen himself, who was so profoundly Christian, was carried along by the stream; in his homilies especially, in contact with the Christian people, he prays with them and as they do; his theological speculation shows itself sometimes by the hesitation it suggests, but this hesitation is overcome by a stronger power.<sup>49</sup> Thus, he gives us this commentary on the precept of charity:

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and thy whole soul, and with all thy might. Someone may say to me: ". . . I want to love Christ; teach me how I ought to love him. For if I love him with my whole heart, and my whole soul, and all my might, I shall go against the precept which allows me to love only God thus. But if I love him less than the Father almighty, I fear I shall commit some impiety towards the Firstborn of all creation. Teach me, then, and show me how I can avoid this twofold danger, and how I ought to love Christ."—You wish to know with what love you should love Christ? I will answer you in one word: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God in Christ. Do you think you can love the Father and Christ with a different love? Love the Lord Christ at the same time. Love the Father in the Son, the Son in the Father, with thy whole heart, with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength. If one should still say to me: "Prove by the Scriptures what you have just said," let him listen to the Apostle Paul, who knew how we ought to love. "I am certain," he says, "that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to sepa-

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Judaising Gnosticism; cf. the note by Cardinal Tisserant in his edition of the *Ascension of Isaiah*, pp. 13 and 190.

<sup>47</sup> *De vita Mosis*, iii, 8.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique*, art. cit., pp. 26-33; *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 631-634, on the traces of subordinationist tendency in prayer and worship.

<sup>49</sup> This opposition between Origen's theory and practice has been brought out more than once, e.g. by Huet, *Origeniana* (Migne, P.G., Vol. XVII, 795), and by Loofs, *Leitfaden zur Dogmengeschichte*, p. 195.

rate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Saviour, to whom be glory and empire for ever and ever. Amen." <sup>50</sup>

These hesitations on the part of Origen, and this disagreement between his theological speculations and the religious practice of his faith, show us in him the twofold current we have distinguished in the Christian Church of his time, while at the same time we see the benefit which both theologians and people derive from a close collaboration. The believer has need of the theologian, that he may the better understand his faith and also that he may defend it against the calumnies or misunderstandings of opponents; indeed, control by the theologian is indispensable for the believer; the popular beliefs must be judged, and if need be corrected and purified by theology. But on his side, the simple believer puts to a test the speculations of the theologian; if in the explanation of a fundamental dogma like that of the Trinity the theologian cannot set forth his ideas without scandalising the faithful, to use Tertullian's phrase, this is a very bad sign, and he will try in vain to discount their testimony by saying that the mass of believers are only "stupid and ignorant," *imprudentes et idiotæ*.<sup>51</sup> St. Paulinus of Nola will later on say with more justice: "We must have regard, as a rule, to the words of all the faithful people, for in every believer we recognise the action of the Holy Spirit." <sup>52</sup>

<sup>50</sup> *In Luc. hom.*, xxv. In the *Contra Celsum*, the question whether worship is to be given to God alone or also to the Son of God is discussed at length; it is in fact one of the main points of the controversy. For Celsus, to associate Jesus with supreme worship is to do what pagan polytheism is accused of doing: it involves the lowering of the divine greatness by an apotheosis similar to those so frequent in paganism. To this accusation Origen gives several answers: he affirms the pre-existence of the Son of God, in order to show that it is not a case of apotheosis, but of the adoration of an eternal divine person. He shows that the whole greatness of the Son comes from the Father, and that it is as such that he is venerated. Lastly—and this is the vulnerable point—he stresses the subordination of the Son in respect to the Father: from the point of view of worship, he describes the Son as the high priest who presents our prayers to God. Is this function derived from the Incarnation? It would seem not; rather it belongs, in Origen as in Philo, to the Logos precisely as such. The main texts of the *Contra Celsum* concerning this question are: V, iv, xiv; VII, lvii; VIII, i, xii, xiii, xiv, xv, xvi, xvii, xxvi, lxvii, lxix.

<sup>51</sup> In his *Adversus Praxean*, iii, Tertullian complains of the scandal taken by the faithful at his Trinitarian theology. We must not infer from this that the mass of the simple believers had then been won to Monarchianism, but rather that they regarded with suspicion the "economy" which was being preached to them, and we must admit that they had reason to be alarmed.

<sup>52</sup> *Epist.*, xiii, 25.

*Authority of the Church*

Above the theologians and the faithful there is the authority of the Church, the supreme judge of all conflicts. This has appeared to us, with a decisive force, in the decision of the Council of Antioch condemning Paul of Samosata, and still more in the dogmatic letter of Pope Dionysius. But in the course of the third century these interventions were rare; many disagreements were settled by colloquies,<sup>53</sup> while others were resolved merely by the exposition of the Christian faith. In all these cases we find the efficacious character of the fraternal collaboration of all Christians who, moved by the same Spirit and nourished by the same traditions, concurred in preserving the sacred deposit.

The great theologians of the third century, whose activity and teaching we have set forth, including even those who fell into error, as we have had to point out, were not just isolated thinkers, but leaders of the Christian people. This can be said of Clement of Alexandria, the head of the Catechetical School, who was priest, and even in his exile an active servant of the Church, and we must say the same above all of Origen, St. Dionysius of Alexandria, and St. Gregory Thaumaturgus. The last mentioned, especially, is an admirable model both of theological studies and of missionary activity; of all the disciples of Origen there is no other who gave himself up with such great devotion and success to the propagation of the Christian faith, nor one who kept the deposit with greater purity.

On the borders of the Church, disowned by her and yet endeavouring to remain in her bosom, some heretical theologians carried on, at their own risk, their dangerous speculations, or mutilated dogma through their rationalist negations, but the faithful were not easily shaken by these temerities, and if later on they were to be led astray by the seduction of Arianism, it was because this error would at first be hidden under the mask of traditional language. "The Arianism of the fourth century," says Newman, "was not a popular heresy. The laity, as a whole, revolted from it in every

<sup>53</sup> It was in this way that Origen succeeded in rescuing from Monarchianism Beryllus, Bishop of Bostra, and to bring back to the truth those who in Arabia denied the immortality of the soul (cf. *supra*, p. 984). In the same way, Dionysius dissipated the illusions of the Millenarianists of Arsinoe (cf. *supra*, p. 1026).

part of Christendom. It was an epidemic of the schools and of theologians, and to them it was mainly confined.”<sup>54</sup>

### *Discord between the Schools and the Christian People*

But if this Arian epidemic was able to spread in the schools, it was because these schools were too isolated from the Christian people; in this respect the history we have been examining enables us to understand better the great crisis of the fourth century. In explaining the origin of Arianism, scholars have often mentioned the Subordinationist theology of a great number of writers of the first three centuries. They are right to do so, but only on condition that we clearly indicate the profound opposition separating this Subordinationism from the theories of Arius. The ante-Nicene writers, as a whole, profess that the Son of God is not a creature, but that he came forth from the very essence of the Father, and this constitutes a contradiction of the fundamental principle of Arianism. If, instead of considering the doctrines held by these theologians, we study the position they occupy in the Church, and especially their relations with the simple faithful, we notice, first of all at Alexandria and then especially at Antioch, an abnormal and dangerous situation. We find Collucianists closely linked together, depending on their master Lucian of Antioch, the learned but isolated priest who, before ending his life by martyrdom, had lived for nearly thirty years (275-302) outside the Church under the three episcopates of Domnus, Timæus and Cyril. The school friends from whom Arius will seek support are named by Philostorgius: they are Eusebius of Nicomedia, Maris of Chalcedon, Theognis of Nicomedia, Leontius of Antioch, Antony of Tarsus, and Asterius of Cappadocia. These men certainly have little resemblance with Origen's friends: Alexander of Jerusalem, Gregory

<sup>54</sup> *Tracts Theological and Ecclesiastical*, pp. 143-144. Newman had enunciated the same thesis, and set it forth in somewhat more detail, in the fifth Appendix to his book, *The Arians of the Fourth Century*, pp. 445-468. St. Hilary had already noticed this feature of the Arianism of that time, which was the heresy of a group of theologians concealing their error under ambiguous formulæ: “The dissimulation of these impious men is such that Christ's people may live under bishops of Antichrist; they think that their belief is in conformity with the words which cover it. They hear it said that Christ is God; they believe that he is what he is said to be; they hear the Son of God spoken of; they believe that in this divine generation there is divine truth. They hear it said that he was born before time; they think that this signifies that he is eternal. The ears of the people are more holy than the hearts of the bishops” (*Contra Auxentius*, vi).

Thaumaturgus and the others are not really connected with the illustrious master any more than Arius himself. But we cannot deny the analogy presented by the situation of these two groups of men, isolated by their science, their scholastic traditions, and by the suspicions which they aroused.

What differentiates these two groups is that Origen and his disciples were, in spite of all difficulties and opposition, men of the Church, and indeed often, as in the case of Dionysius and Gregory, admirable apostles, whereas the Collucianists were merely partisans. In this respect the first supporters of Arianism were linked up with the Rationalists, Artemon or Paul, who troubled the Church in the third century. They saw in Christianity only a religious speculation of which they were masters, and one which they claimed to carry on in complete freedom, without opposition either from the tradition they misrepresented, or from Scripture which they corrected, or from the authority they despised. Opposed to them were the Christian people, who rose up to defend the divinity of Christ. The teaching of Clement, Origen, or even of Dionysius of Alexandria, might arouse antipathy, mistrust, or denunciations; that of Paul of Samosata aroused a revolt. The same happened in the case of Arius, and here again, in spite of all the cunning of the heresiarch and all the intrigues of the Court, the revolt by the Christian people guided by its leaders will carry all before it.

CHRISTIAN LITERATURE UNDER  
DIOCLETIAN§ I. THE AFRICAN WRITERS<sup>1</sup>*The Latin Writers*

THE early years of the fourth century are of interest in Church history especially because of the great persecution which for a space of ten years ravaged and purified it, and prepared it for the peace under Constantine. In this bloody crisis, the writings which are of most value for us are the Acts of the martyrs. Even so, we must pay some attention to the Latin writers who reveal to us various aspects of Christian life at this time.

*Arnobius*

It was in Africa that the Christian literature of the time made its appearance, and the first to represent it was a pagan, not very well instructed in the Christian faith which he wished to accept and undertook to defend. Arnobius, of Sicca in Numidia,<sup>2</sup> was a professor of rhetoric, well known in his own town. Like other rhetoricians, he had often attacked the Christian faith in his addresses. In consequence of a dream which had led him to decide to become a Christian, he went to see the Bishop of Sicca, who welcomed with some hesitation this aged neophyte already in his sixties, whom he had hitherto regarded only as an enemy of religion. The persecution had just broken out;<sup>3</sup> and it was not desirable that one should become a Christian merely out of caprice. The bishop wanted a guarantee from the newcomer; Arnobius composed an Apology in seven books against the pagans.

<sup>1</sup> Bibliography.—See works suggested for each writer.

<sup>2</sup> Editions: Reifferscheid, in the Vienna *Corpus*, Vol. IV, 1875; Migne, *P.L.*, Vol. V, 718-1288.—Studies: Monceaux, *Histoire littéraire de l'Afrique chrétienne*, Vol. III, pp. 241-286; P. de Labriolle, *Histoire de la littérature latine chrétienne*, pp. 252-267.

<sup>3</sup> The work of Arnobius is usually dated 303-305; Monceaux put the first two books a little earlier, about the year 297.

In this candidate for the catechumenate, we must not expect an exact knowledge of the religion he had not yet learnt. He was, in fact, not very well acquainted with his subject-matter. As an old rhetorician, he was familiar with pagan literature, and he made abundant use of it. Of Christian books he had as yet read only a few Apologies, those of Tertullian, Minucius Felix and Cyprian, and perhaps also the *Protreptikos* of Clement of Alexandria. The New Testament is rarely quoted, and not always correctly;<sup>4</sup> the Old Testament is abandoned. "Let no one oppose to us the fables of the Jews. . . . They do not concern us, and have absolutely nothing in common with us." Yet after this categorical disavowal, this extemporising apologist modifies his statement: "But if, as is thought, these writings belong to us, you must seek for interpreters who are more profound than we are."<sup>5</sup>

Badly instructed in the Bible, Arnobius was scarcely better equipped in regard to Christian doctrine. "We Christians," he says, "are simply adorers of the sovereign King and Prince, and disciples of Christ; you will find nothing more in our religion."<sup>6</sup> He eloquently develops natural theology, but does not go beyond it. God is "the First Cause, containing all things, the foundation of all that exists, having neither quality nor quantity, nor location, nor motion, nor form; human language can say nothing of him, nor express anything; to understand him we must keep silence."<sup>7</sup> This negative theology is of course part of the general teaching, and the same is true of belief in a *Summus Deus*. What is more disconcerting is to find below this sovereign God a multitude of "inferior deities," born of him or created by him.<sup>8</sup> Arnobius urges his pagan opponents not to confine their worship to these *dii minores*, but to ascend to the Supreme God.<sup>9</sup> He reminds them of the *Timæus* of Plato; there they will see that "the gods and the world are not immortal by nature, but are kept in existence by the will of the God who is king and prince."<sup>10</sup> This teaching was doubtless under-

<sup>4</sup> De Labriolle, *op. cit.*, p. 256. Thus, in enumerating the miracles of Jesus: "One single word that he uttered appeared to different peoples speaking different languages as pronounced in their own tongue" (I, xlvi). We recognise here a rather confused recollection of the miracle of Pentecost.

<sup>5</sup> *Adversus Nationes*, III, xii. Cf. De Labriolle, *op. cit.*, pp. 256-257.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, I, xxvii.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, I, xxxi.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, II, xxxv-xxxvi. Cf. Batiffol, *La Paix constantinienne*, pp. 196 et seq.

<sup>9</sup> *Adversus Nationes*, II, iii.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, II, xxxvi.



stood by the pagans without difficulty, but it would not lead them to abandon the Syncretism which at that time the most cultivated among them found so satisfying.

Still basing himself on Plato, Arnobius protests that souls are not the immediate work of the supreme God, but of an inferior deity, yet one very high in dignity. The proof of this is that souls can err and fall. All this is presented by the apologist as the teaching of Christ;<sup>11</sup> and it is also on Christ's authority that he teaches that the soul is not immortal, but may either be destroyed by the fire of Hell or be saved by the mercy of God, according to its works.<sup>12</sup>

In the case of Minucius Felix, we regretted the lacunæ in an apologetic which presented only those features of Christianity which pagan readers would be likely to accept without difficulty.<sup>13</sup> In Arnobius we find not only this deliberate reserve, but, what is worse, the error of a writer who, having undertaken the defence of a Faith he does not as yet know, misunderstands its dogmas. We are not surprised that the Church did not regard his *Apology* as an authentic exposition of its own beliefs, and instead placed it with apocryphal *Acts* among the books which were not "received."<sup>14</sup>

But though subsequently the Church rejected the testimony of Arnobius, she adopted a less severe attitude towards the writer himself; she welcomed the courageous writer who, although he did not yet know her properly, testified on her behalf in the midst of persecution, at the risk of martyrdom.

### *Lactantius*

Lactantius<sup>15</sup> was a pupil of Arnobius; he left Africa for Nicomedia where, doubtless as the result of a competition, he had been named by the emperor professor of Latin rhetoric. The East was

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, I, xxxvi-xxxvii.

<sup>12</sup> "Sunt enim mediæ qualitatis, sicut Christo auctore compertum est, et interire quæ possint, deum si ignoraverint, vitæ et ab exitio liberari, si ad ejus se misericordias atque indulgentias adplicarint" (*Ibid.*, II, xiv). We remember that a similar doctrine had been taught by Tatian (cf. Bk. II, p. 574 and n. 13), and that Origen had to refute it in a colloquy with the Arabian Christians (cf. *supra*, p. 984).

<sup>13</sup> Cf. *supra*, Bk. II, p. 581.

<sup>14</sup> Gelasius, *De libris recipiendis* (Migne, P.L., Vol. LIX, 163).

<sup>15</sup> Editions: Brandt and Laubmann, in the *Vienna Corpus*, Vols. XIX and XXVII; Migne, P.L., Vols. VI and VII.—Studies: Pichon, *Lactance*, Paris, 1901; Monceaux, *op. cit.*, pp. 287-359; P. de Labriolle, *op. cit.*, pp. 268-295.

becoming more and more isolated from the western world, and a professor of Latin language and literature had a certain amount of leisure; Lactantius devoted his to writing.<sup>16</sup>

He was some forty years old when, about 290, he arrived at Nicomedia. He had been born a pagan and was still one at that date; but he was no longer a pagan when the persecution broke out in 303. In February of that year he was an eye-witness of the destruction of the church of Nicomedia. He was still a professor at that date. Two years later, after the abdication of Diocletian (May 305), Galerius, the sole master of the East, closed the schools: "Eloquence was condemned; advocates suppressed; jurists exiled or put to death; letters were regarded as the profession of malefactors, and scholars were treated as enemies, crushed and execrated."<sup>17</sup> Until then, Lactantius had been able to live in Nicomedia without restraint; now he was reduced to poverty. During these terrible years we lose trace of him; we find him again at Nicomedia after the Edict of Galerius (10th April 311). Constantine, who had spent several years as a hostage in the hands of Diocletian and Galerius, and who had thus come to know the Christian rhetorician, remembered him and called him into Gaul to his son Crispus. Lactantius had by then arrived at "an extreme old age,"<sup>18</sup> and he thus finished at the court of Constantine a life which had been full of many trials.

In the course of his long life, Lactantius had written much, both before and after his conversion. He composed a poem in hexameters on his journey from Africa to Bithynia, then a *Banquet*, as St. Methodius also did about the same time. He collected into several books a number of Letters, which later on Pope Damasus found very wearisome. St. Jerome mentions also some books addressed to Asclepiades and Probus, and a treatise on grammar. We still possess a small treatise *On Creation* written about 303 or 305, seven books of *Divine Institutions*, composed between 304 and 313, and subsequently re-edited in a shorter form under the name of *Epitome*, an *opusculum On the Wrath of God* which St. Jerome thought excellent, and lastly, after the Peace of the Church, a book *On the Death of Persecutors*.

<sup>16</sup> St. Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, lxxx: "He taught rhetoric at Nicomedia and, as he had few pupils in that Greek city, he began to write."

<sup>17</sup> *De mortibus persecutorum*, xxii, 5.

<sup>18</sup> St. Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, lxxx.

This last work <sup>19</sup> is the most individual of all; the others often tire the reader by a somewhat cold correctness, in which we find the professor of rhetoric rather than the man. Lactantius had suffered much during ten years; his friend Donatus, to whom he dedicates his book, had suffered still more. Three governors had proceeded against him: first Flaccinus, then Hierocles, and finally Priscillian; he was put to the torture nine times, but conquered them all: "What a spectacle for the eyes of God. . . . That is a real triumph, to reign over kings" (xvi, 4-7). The work begins with a song of victory:

All our enemies have been routed, peace has been restored to the world, and here is the Church, so recently buffeted, rising up once more, and through the mercy of God, the temple of God which the wicked had destroyed is clothed with greater glory (I, 2).

Then, after a short introduction recalling some features of the previous history of the Church, and the punishments which have fallen upon its persecutors, Lactantius comes to the reign of Diocletian, and traces step by step the bloody events he has himself witnessed. In this picture rhetoric is not absent, but it is inspired by a passion so sincere that we become eye-witnesses of those tragic scenes: the long hesitations of the aged Diocletian, who comes under the strong influence of Galerius; this leads Diocletian first to police measures, and the destruction of churches; then he is induced by anger and terror to start the bloody persecution (chs. xi-xiv). Two years later efforts are made to persuade Diocletian to abdicate: the old man laments and weeps, then at last yields to severe pressure, saying: "Let it be so, if you wish it." Then Galerius insists that he shall choose between the two Cæsars, Severus and Maximin Daia. Diocletian at first rebels: "Do you want me to entrust the government of the State to these unworthy men?"—"I will answer for it."—"Very well: it is your affair, as you are taking the supreme power; for my part I have worked hard enough and looked to the security of the State; if some misfortune should come about now, I shall not be responsible." And finally we have the unforgettable scene in which, to the astonishment of the army, Daia is suddenly made Cæsar: "He was taken away from his herds

<sup>19</sup> The authenticity of this book has been often called in question, but since Pichon's work it is generally accepted. Cf. Pichon, *op. cit.*, pp. 377-383; Monceaux, *op. cit.*, pp. 340-344; De Labriolle, *op. cit.*, pp. 288-293; Moricca, *Storia della Letteratura Latina Cristiana*, Vol. I, 1925, pp. 652-657.

and woods, and given the East to trample under foot and to crush" (chs. xviii-xix). These incidents have arrested the attention of all, and even to-day this tragic history cannot be narrated without making use of the recollections of Lactantius.

Like Eusebius, with whom, incidentally, he has many characteristics in common, Lactantius freely quotes official documents, and these citations are of a striking character. Thus, after the account of the shameful and painful agony of Galerius, we have the edict in which this dying persecutor speaks of his clemency, and asks Christians to pray to their God for him (ch. xxxiv). And at the end of this narrative, so full of emotion and of pride, the Christian writer cries out:

Where are now those magnificent and haughty surnames of Jupiter and Hercules, which Diocles<sup>20</sup> and Maximian insolently adopted and bequeathed to their successors? The Lord has blotted them out from the earth. Let us celebrate the triumph of God, and sing of the victory of the Lord; day and night in our prayers let us celebrate it, that God may confirm for all eternity this peace which after ten years he has granted to his people (ch. lii).

### *Commodianus*

Side by side with these two rhetoricians, but in strange contrast with them, Africa produced a plebeian who in two popular poems exalted his faith and reproved his opponents. Commodianus<sup>21</sup> is personally unknown to us; there has been much discussion as to his country of origin, and the time when he lived. His two small books are almost our only source of information; they invite us to look for their author in Africa, during the period which we are at present studying.<sup>22</sup>

Like Arnobius and Lactantius, Commodianus was of pagan origin;<sup>23</sup> like them he became an apologist, but he adopted quite

<sup>20</sup> [Diocles was the original name of Diocletian.—Tr.]

<sup>21</sup> Edition of the *Instructiones* in Migne, P.L., Vol. V; the *Carmen Apologeticum* is in Pitra, *Spicilegium Solesmense*, Vol. I, pp. 21-49. Edition of the two poems by Dombart in the *Vienna Corpus*, Vol. XV.—Studies: Monceaux, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 451-489; P. de Labriolle, *op. cit.*, pp. 234-251.

<sup>22</sup> Monceaux (*op. cit.*, p. 458) dates them "certainly after 260 and before 313, very likely between 305 and 313; and doubtless, if the author imitated Lactantius, in 311-312." P. de Labriolle (*op. cit.*, p. 249) says: "between 250 and the Edict of Milan (313)."

<sup>23</sup> *Instit.*, I, i, 5.

another method. He had little training in classical culture, and no taste for it. What is the use of reading Virgil, Cicero and Terence? What is wanted is a rule of life;<sup>24</sup> and this is precisely what he claims to give his readers. He does so in two books. The first, called *Instructiones*, is a collection of eighty pieces;<sup>25</sup> the second, called *Carmen Apologeticum*, is a poem of 1,060 hexameters. In these two books, the language displays no care for morphology or syntax, and the verse disdains metre.<sup>26</sup> Through all these careless ways the author continues his poem as best he can, as a labourer pushes a barrow across broken ground. Seeing him carrying on in this fashion, literary minds might well regard the man with compassion, pitying "his barren style, and his verses, which do not deserve the name."<sup>27</sup>

Theologians have more serious criticisms to make: as Gennadius says, this convert, who made himself an apologist, was ignorant of almost all Christian doctrines. The God whom he praises and usually calls the Supreme (*Summus Deus*) is the sovereign deity venerated by many pagans at that time.<sup>28</sup> True, a rapid reading of the Old Testament and of the Gospels had enriched and purified this conception of the Supreme Being, but it had not given it the firmness and fullness it has in the Christian revelation. We notice this especially when the apologist tries to expound the mysteries of the Trinity or the Incarnation. His very confused statements suggest a Monarchianist and Modalist theology rather than the doc-

<sup>24</sup> *Carmen*, v. 577 et seq.

<sup>25</sup> These pieces are acrostics or alphabetical compositions; these artifices are apparently intended to help in memorising.

<sup>26</sup> On the language and metre, cf. Monceaux, *op. cit.*, pp. 481-489. These verses of Commodianus should be compared with those of the metric inscriptions fairly common in Africa, which are distant imitations of the classic hexameters. Cf. Monceaux, *op. cit.*, pp. 430-449.

<sup>27</sup> These are the expressions of Gennadius (*De viris illustribus*, xv): "Scripsit mediocri sermone quasi versu." He adds: "As he had scarcely opened Christian books, he was better able to refute the errors of our opponents than to establish the truth of our doctrine."

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Batiffol, *Summus Deus*, in *La Paix constantinienne*, pp. 188-201. Batiffol indicates traces of this cult in the apologists Arnobius and Lactantius; to these we must add Commodianus, in whom the title *Summus* is the proper name of God. Thus, in *Carmen*, v. 26-27, we read:

"Cui Summus divitias, honores addidit altos.  
Nec enim vitupero divitias datas a Summo."

Cf. *ibid.*, v. 55; 432; 444; 535; 540; 737; 917; 924; 960.

trine of one God in three Persons, and of the incarnate Son of God.<sup>29</sup> Tertullian, as we remember, complained that simple folk want to hear only about the divine Monarchy, and were alarmed by the Trinity.<sup>30</sup> In that respect also Commodianus was one of the simple people. He was simple also in the wholehearted adhesion he gave to Millenarianism, conceived, as Gennadius says, in its lowest and grossest form.<sup>31</sup> In the *Instructiones*, this eschatology is only briefly mentioned; in the *Carmen* it is the subject of more than two hundred lines; the poet delights in these pictures of troubles, massacres, feastings and triumphs;<sup>32</sup> everything is found there—an interpretation of the *Apocalypse*, the dreams of Papias, the imprecations of the Sybilline books, and even a secret source which the author does not specify more clearly.<sup>33</sup>

It is not unlikely that the ten years of troubles which the Church had passed through, and the triumph which had followed, gave to Christian eschatology a character which was often rather materialistic, and which contrasted with the symbolical interpretation St. Dionysius had vindicated about the year 260. Millenarianism appears in the three Africans we have just been studying; we shall find it again, but in a much more moderate form, in Methodius. Lastly, we notice in these Africans, at least in Arnobius and Commodianus,<sup>34</sup> a hatred of Rome which was unknown to their predecessors; we see in it the beginnings of that jealous regionalism which will very soon endanger the unity of the Empire and constitute a grave peril for the Church itself.

<sup>29</sup> *Carmen*, v. 275 *et seq.*:

"Hic Pater in Filio venit, Deus unus ubique.

Nec Pater est dictus, nisi factus Filius esset . . ."

v. 358 *et seq.*:

"Idcirco nec voluit se manifestare quid esset,  
Sed Filium dixit se missum fuisse a Patre.  
Sic ipse tradiderat semet ipsum dici prophetis,  
Ut Deus in terris Altissimi Filius esset."

These texts seem to indicate fairly clearly that God, in becoming man, manifested himself as Son of God.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 1084.

<sup>31</sup> *Instructiones*, xlv, 9: "Et generant ipsi per annos mille nubentes." Cf. Lactantius, *Institutiones*, VII, xxiv: ". . . non morientur; sed per eosdem mille annos infinitam multitudinem generabunt."

<sup>32</sup> *Instructiones*, xli-xlv; *Carmen*, v. 783-end.

<sup>33</sup> He thus speaks of the return of Nero: "De quo pauca tamen suggero, quæ legi secreta."

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Monceaux, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 242-243 and 461.

§ 2. ST. METHODIUS OF OLYMPUS<sup>1</sup>*Works of St. Methodius*

Of the various writers in the period we are studying, St. Methodius is one whose literary output has been best preserved; yet his personality is one of the least known. Whereas we can cite only a few fragments of the theological works of the last Alexandrians of the century, we possess whole works of Methodius, either in the original Greek or in Slavonic versions. But in these works the author does not tell us much about himself, and his contemporaries or successors scarcely speak of him. Eusebius greatly resented Methodius's opposition to Origen, and he took his revenge by being silent about him.

*His Literary Activity*

Methodius, Bishop of Olympus in Lycia,<sup>2</sup> had a brilliant career as a writer towards the end of the third and the beginning of the fourth centuries. He was trained in Hellenic culture and a great reader of the philosophers, especially of Plato, and he also possessed an extensive knowledge of Christian literature, e.g. the apologists,

<sup>1</sup> Editions and Translations: *Methodius, herausgegeben* von N. Bonwetsch, Leipzig, 1917; the same editor had published in 1891 in a German translation the Slavonic version of the works of Methodius.—Migne, P.G., Vol. XVIII, 27-408.—*The De Autexusio of Methodius of Olympus*, Slavonic version and Greek text, translated into French by A. Vaillant, Paris, 1930 (*Patrologia orientalis*, XXII, 5), *Le Banquet des dix vierges*, translated into French by J. Farges, Paris, 1932; *Du libre arbitre*, ditto, with introduction by J. Farges, Paris, 1929.—Studies: J. Farges, *Les idées morales et religieuses de Méthode d'Olympe*, Paris, 1929; A. Puech, *Histoire de la Littérature grecque chrétienne*, Vol. II, pp. 511-540; E. Amann, art. *Méthode d'Olympe* in *Dict. de Théol. Cath.*, Vol. X, cols. 1606-1614; G. Bardy, *La Vie spirituelle d'après les Pères des trois premiers siècles*, Paris, 1935, pp. 301-316.

<sup>2</sup> There has been much discussion as to the episcopal see occupied by Methodius, and it has been placed in turn at Olympus, Para, Sidon, Tyre, Myra and finally at Philippi. In favour of this last city, F. Diekamp brings forward the data of the Slavonic version, which other indications seem to confirm (*Theol. Quartalschrift*, Vol. CIX, 1928, pp. 285-308); his ideas have been accepted by M. Lebon in *Revue d'Hist. ecclési.*, Vol. XXV, 1929, pp. 357-358, but his conclusions are rejected by Vaillant, *op. cit.*, p. 636, n. 1: "The recent article by Diekamp proves only one thing, and that is that the error goes back to John of Antioch, that is, to the seventh century." Cf. Bonwetsch, *op. cit.*, p. xxxvii. Methodius's stay in Lycia in the neighbourhood of Mount Olympus is attested by himself (*De resurrectione*, ii, 23).

Irenæus, the Alexandrians, and above all Origen,<sup>3</sup> to whom he seems to have given great praise in his first writings.<sup>4</sup> Subsequently, when he was attacking the Origenist doctrine on creation, he still continued to express his admiration for its author. But gradually the disagreement became more acute; in the treatise *On Free Will*, the tone was still quite moderate, but in the book *On the Resurrection* the judgment was severe, and at once led to violent protests which caused Methodius much trouble.<sup>5</sup>

This literary activity seems to have had as its basis an oral teaching which collected around Methodius a circle of disciples. It was to them that Methodius addressed himself at the beginning of his treatise *On Free Will*:

I feel that I am already enjoying the highest good things in dealing with these questions, especially when I have before me such an array of flowers as the assembly constituted by all you who together listen and praise with me the divine mysteries. And to you I speak without fear, because you listen to me with ears free from all envy. . . . O splendid audience, august banquet, and rich spiritual food! It is in such society that I have always wished to live.<sup>6</sup>

### *The Treatise On Free Will*

This Introduction provides a framework for the dialogue, and enables us better to understand it. It is not a verbatim account of a real discussion, such as that which Dionysius of Alexandria had carried on at Arsinoe against Nepos, or Origen at Bostra against Beryllus; it is not even a fictional account of a real meeting, as would seem to be the case with the dialogue of Justin with Trypho;

<sup>3</sup> In elucidating his points of contact with previous literature, it will be useful to consult the index in Bonwetsch, *op. cit.*, pp. 532-538.

<sup>4</sup> St. Jerome, replying to Rufinus, writes: "Eusebius of Cæsarea, in the sixth book of his *Apology for Origen*, addresses to Methodius, bishop and martyr, the reproaches which you address to me because of the way I have praised Origen. He says: 'How could Methodius now write against Origen, seeing that he himself has spoken in such terms of Origen's doctrines?'" This *Apology* belongs to the year 308.

<sup>5</sup> He remarks on this at the beginning of his little treatise *On the Distinction of Foods*: "How Satan made me suffer, when I finished my treatise *On Virginity*! And then how many trials he heaped upon me even before I could finish the Treatise *On the Resurrection*! He raised up the waves like impassable mountains, i.e. sufferings and attacks so great that they made me despair of life" (ed. Bonwetsch, p. 427). This progressive development of the Origenist polemics in Methodius has been well traced by Vaillant, *op. cit.*, p. 652.

<sup>6</sup> Ed. Vaillant, p. 730.



it is a pure literary fiction, bringing together the upholders of opposite doctrines, and intended to be read by a public interested in such discussions.

In this dialogue, which is to-day known as the treatise *On Free Will*, but which the Slavonic version more correctly called *On God, Matter, and Free Will*, Methodius set out to seek for the origin of evil. This does not come from an uncreated matter, it is not eternal like God; it arises from the abuse of free will. The question here debated is one which had been much discussed during a century and a half. The opponents envisaged by Methodius are not Gnostics, but Platonists. In the course of the discussion, the apologist more than once comes up against Origen. He subscribes to the latter's defence of free will and his explanation of the apostasy of the devil, but rejects his idea of an eternal succession of worlds.<sup>7</sup>

### *The Banquet of Ten Virgins*

The *Banquet of Ten Virgins* is likewise a literary exercise. As its title indicates, it is inspired by Plato, and it is certainly a bold stroke on the part of Methodius to undertake to rewrite Plato's *Banquet*, and still more to transform the eulogy of Love into a eulogy of Virginity. If we consider the literary form, we must admit at once that the imitation does not come up to the model: from beginning to end the writer pursues his theme of virginity without succeeding in giving a personal and living picture of the virgins he introduces. He is a better Christian than an artist; he has before his eyes a very high ideal, and from time to time, especially in the discourse of Thecla and in the final hymn, he raises himself up to this ideal, taking his audience with him.

The name of Thecla, which we have just mentioned, takes us back towards the *Acts of Paul*, and this is not the only feature in which the *Banquet* of Methodius reminds us of the apocryphal *Acts* of apostles. We find it brimful of that personal devotion to Christ which the authors of the *Acts* treated with such fervour, and which Origen on the contrary tried to restrain.<sup>8</sup> But above all, this enthusiastic eulogy of virginity, which occupies the whole book from one end to the other, introduces us to a circle very like that

<sup>7</sup> This refutation is explicitly formulated in the *De creatis*, quoted by Photius (ed. Bonwetsch, pp. 494 *et seq.*); we find its starting point in the work *On Free Will* (ed. Vaillant, p. 831); cf. *Introduction*, *ibid.*, p. 650.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *supra*, pp. 991 and 1083.

of the *Acts* of Paul, Peter, John and Thomas. But we must point out here that the Bishop of Olympus avoids absolutely the exaggerated thesis often maintained by the authors of those *Acts*.

There is no trace of encratism in him: virginity is exalted as the best life of all, and the one most closely united to Christ, but marriage is not a corruption; we must praise and prefer purity, but not regard the generation of children with disgust. And repeating the words of St. Paul, Methodius continues: "He that giveth his virgin in marriage doth well, and he that giveth her not doth better." He adds: "In setting forth that which is better and sweeter, the Word has not forbidden the rest, but he has laid down as a law the assigning to each one of what is proper and useful to him."<sup>9</sup>

### *The Treatise On the Resurrection*

The treatise *On the Resurrection* is, as we have seen, later than the *Banquet*; the discussion of the Origenist theses which is only incidental in the other books is here always to the fore. Methodius very fairly sets forth the thesis of his opponent: the human body may be compared to a river; it does not remain two days the same; what ensures its identity is the permanence of the "characteristic form"; in the resurrection the soul will assume this again, yet the substratum which preceded will not be quite the same.<sup>10</sup>

This interpretation does not satisfy Methodius; he requires something more to ensure the identity of the risen body: just as at the Transfiguration Christ's body, as it then was, became luminous, so also our bodies will be transfigured, yet will be identical with our present ones.<sup>11</sup>

The Origenist hypothesis of the pre-existence of souls is rejected more sternly and with more reason: to say that souls have come

<sup>9</sup> All this speech by Theophilus is devoted to this theme; the author therein describes the generation of children in so exact a manner that the French translator (Farges) more than once abandons his task and replaces some lines by marks of omission. [He seems to do so out of a false sense of modesty. I quote this passage in full, and a similar passage from St. John Chrysostom, in a forthcoming work on the *Mystery of Sex and Marriage*.—Tr.]

<sup>10</sup> This explanation of Origen's, taken from his commentaries on the *Psalms* (Migne, P.G., Vol. XII, 1093) is transcribed by Methodius in the *De resurrectione*, i, 20-24; the essential portion of the text has been translated by Prat, *Origène*, pp. 92-94. As is pointed out by Prat and Farges (*Les Idées morales*, p. 195), this explanation, which Methodius rejects, would not be condemned by modern theologians.

<sup>11</sup> *De resurrectione*, iii, 14.

down to earth from heaven is to use fine words which make no sense, and to invent a fable worthy of tragedy.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, it is not true that the body is a prison for the soul; it is an instrument which the soul can use, certainly in order to sin, but also in order to do good.<sup>13</sup>

### *The Theology of Methodius*

In all these discussions we note that Methodius is very much on his guard against Origenism, the attractiveness of which he fully realises, and from which he wants to preserve or deliver his hearers. His own theology has here and there some obscurities or confusion;<sup>14</sup> but on the whole it is more faithful to tradition; Methodius attaches more value to the ideas of the churchmen who have preceded him, and this constituted a safeguard so far as he himself was concerned.

In a work composed during the lifetime of Methodius and belonging to his school, there is a lengthy citation from the bishop, given not under the name of its author but as "the doctrine of the Universal Church."<sup>15</sup> This strong expression at least indicates the aim of the Bishop of Olympus: he wants to be a churchman above

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, i, 55.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, i, 54 *et seq.* Cf. J. Farges, *op. cit.*, pp. 97 *et seq.*

<sup>14</sup> Particularly in the *Banquet*, discourse iii. Thus, on the suitability of the Incarnation, he says: "It was very suitable that the most ancient of the Aeons, the first of the Archangels, having to come into human society, should establish his dwelling in the most ancient and first of men, Adam." Farges, on whose French translation this English text is based, notes: "In spite of the dogmatic inaccuracy of certain expressions, there is no room for doubt as to the meaning of the doctrine of Methodius: it is in perfect harmony with the Faith which will be defined at Nicæa." Combefis was of a different opinion: "Id purus Arianismus est" (Migne, P.G., Vol. XVIII, 65, n. 42). I do not think it is correct to regard this as Arianism: Methodius taught the eternal generation of the Son of God (*Banquet*, viii, 9), which was denied by Arianism; but it must at least be allowed that he was not able to keep himself from Subordinationism: cf. *Banquet*, viii, 7; x, 6; *Adv. Porph.*, fragm., 2. His Christology was likewise set forth sometimes in an incorrect manner, particularly in *Banquet*, iii, 3-7. Combefis finds Nestorianism here (*loc. cit.*), but there is no need to go so far as that, especially if we consider the theology of Methodius as a whole; but it must be granted that in these matters, which had not then been fully defined, his thought was lacking in precision.

<sup>15</sup> Adamantius, *De recta in Deum fide*, iv, 11 (ed. Van de Sande Bakhuyzen, p. 168). This treatise, written in the time of persecution (i, 21; Rufinus's translation, p. 41), is later than the works of Methodius, which it utilises, and must belong to the early years of the fourth century. It seems to have been written by a member of the school of Methodius. Cf. Vaillant, *op. cit.*, pp. 651-653.

all else. This had been the ambition of Origen;<sup>16</sup> it is also that of Methodius, and in him it is more farseeing, more thorough, and more effective as a safeguard.

If we consider the doctrine of Methodius as a whole, we recognise in it several features which betray an early Origenist training from which he never completely freed himself. In the first place, we have the allegorical interpretation of Scripture: the Jewish legislation must be regarded as a symbol of Christian realities.<sup>17</sup> Then in theology we have the fundamental importance attributed to the doctrine of freedom, and the refutation of astrological fatalism; again, the Subordinationist conception which sees in the Son and the Holy Spirit the "lance-bearing powers" of God;<sup>18</sup> and more generally, the idealist philosophy which is, as it were, the atmosphere in which Methodius lives and thinks.

But the further we proceed in reading his works, we find that the theologian puts himself on guard, with a vigilance increasing from one work to another, in respect to the seductions of idealism. He silences the Sirens in order to hear only the Choir of the Prophets;<sup>19</sup> he rejects the pre-existence of souls, interprets the resurrection of the body in the strictest way, and repudiates the whole Origenist eschatology.<sup>20</sup>

Methodius's theology bears the marks of this early formation and later reaction: sometimes bold and at other times timid, it is on the whole prudently balanced, but somewhat lacking in assurance. It seems to have had a certain influence: the work *On the Orthodox Faith*, which we have mentioned above, is an indication of this;<sup>21</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Vaillant (*op. cit.*, p. 651) recalls the declarations of Origen at the beginning of his treatise *De principiis*. It must be remembered that, during the eighty years which separated the two works, the Church's doctrine had been defined in a more precise way.

<sup>17</sup> This is particularly noticeable in the two small treatises *On the Distinction of Foods* and *On Leprosy*. But it must be observed that Methodius is more reserved than Barnabas; he accepts the literal meaning of the prescriptions; he sees in the ritual prescriptions a symbolical signification, as well as the literal sense.

<sup>18</sup> *Banquet*, x, 6. This formula comes from Philo. Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, p. 422 and n. 2.

<sup>19</sup> *On Free Will*, Preface.

<sup>20</sup> This reaction goes so far that it brings Methodius near the Millenarianists. He is certainly not so realistic as St. Irenæus, but like him, he looks for a millennium of rest and happiness after the Resurrection. Cf. *Banquet*, ix, 1 and ix, 5. Cf. Farges, *Idées morales*, pp. 212 *et seq.*

<sup>21</sup> This work, which bears the name of Adamantius and is entitled *Dialogue on the Orthodox Faith*, is a refutation of the heresies of Marcion and Valentine.

but this influence did not spread very far. Moreover, current events helped to stifle it: the bloody years of the reigns of Diocletian and Galerius were not very favourable to theological speculation, and the din of the persecutions drowned the voice of Methodius. It was the last act of the tragedy which had continued during three centuries. With the edicts of pacification a new era was to begin, and fifteen years after the death of Methodius we shall have the Council of Nicæa. The theology which we have been studying was entirely ante-Nicene. Methodius was not a forerunner; Dionysius of Rome and Gregory Thaumaturgus opened the way for the Fathers of Nicæa, but we cannot say as much for the Bishop of Olympus. In the doctrine of the Trinity he does not altogether manage to free himself from the confusion which Dionysius of Rome criticised in the catechists of Alexandria; moreover, it was not questions of theology that attracted his attention but rather moral and mystical problems, free will and human responsibility, and still more virginity and union with Christ, the heavenly Spouse of souls.

That is why Methodius is of such interest to us even today. Of the speculative problems he discussed, several concern only the historians of the third century; but every Christian can read once more with profit his eulogy of virginity and, thinking of his life crowned by martyrdom—for he died a martyr's death in 311—apply to him the refrain of the canticle he puts in the mouth of Thecla: "I keep myself pure for thee, and carrying my lighted lamp, O Spouse, I come to meet thee."

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Its chief interest is that it gives us more knowledge of these two heresies. Editions: Van de Sande Bakhuysen, in the *Berlin Corpus*; Migne, *P.G.*, Vol. XI, 1711-1884. Study: Puech, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 536-540.

ECCLESIASTICAL ORGANISATION<sup>1</sup>

DURING this third century, while the Church was extending its conquests in the way we have described and its relations with the State were passing through such sharp alternations, its own structure remained in its essential elements what it already was in the preceding century.

For already from about the middle of the second century, the Church took the form which in the main she would henceforth possess. The essential elements of ecclesiastical organisation which existed at least in germ from the beginning are seen at that time in their definite and final contours. In the period immediately following, we shall find only variations or growths of secondary importance, although these are not without interest as expressions of the Church's development.

## § I. CLERGY AND LAITY

*Training of the Clergy*

We have seen that from the first there was a distinction between those whose business it was to direct their brethren in the Faith and the simple believers, in other words between clergy and laity. The former, who had the task of instructing and training the latter in the Christian life, had themselves to receive a training which would fit them for the task. The progressive subdivision of the ecclesiastical orders, and the custom which soon arose of raising a

<sup>1</sup> Bibliography.—As for ch. xi. Add the works indicated in the notes to the present chapter, and the following: F. X. Funk, *Zölibat und Priestertum im Christlichen Altertum*, in *Kirchengeschichtliche Abhandlungen und Untersuchungen*, Vol. I, Paderborn, 1927, pp. 151 et seq.; E. Vacandard, *Les origines du célibat ecclésiastique*, in *Etudes de critique et d'histoire religieuse*, Vol. I, Paris, 1913, pp. 62 et seq.; Ch. de Smedt, *L'organisation des Eglises chrétiennes au IIIe siècle*, in *Revue des Questions historiques*, Vol. I, 1891-1892, pp. 397 et seq.; L. Duchesne, *Notes sur la topographie de Rome au moyen âge*, II. *Les titres presbytéraux et les diaconies*, in *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire*, published by the French School in Rome, Vol. VII, 1887, pp. 218 et seq.; J. P. Kirsch, *Die römische Titelkirchen*, in *Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des Altertums*, IX, 1-2, Paderborn, 1918.

cleric to a higher order only after he had been tested in a lower one, facilitated this system of training. The catechetical schools doubtless also played their part, although they had at first only a somewhat more elementary function. In short, "the methodic teaching of the art of ruling souls took the place of the extraordinary effusion of spiritual gifts or charisms which had so largely contributed to the instruction and direction of the newly born Church in the apostolic age (I Cor. xii, 28 *et seq.*)."<sup>2</sup>

### *Their Obligations*

The clergy to whom was entrusted so high a mission ought to be able to devote themselves wholly to it. Hence the principle that he who serves the altar should live by the altar (I Cor. ix, 13). The faithful carried out their obligations in this matter by bringing offerings (*oblaciones*) to the divine service. The *Didache* (ch. xiii) and the *Didascalia of the Apostles* (chs. viii and xviii) call upon Christians to remember the Church when disposing of their goods. The building up of ecclesiastical property, which we deal with later on,<sup>3</sup> will moreover very soon ensure resources less subject to fluctuation. Nevertheless, neither the ecclesiastical revenues nor the contributions of the faithful were everywhere and always sufficient for the upkeep of the clergy. Some of the clergy possessed private fortunes and lived thereby, or following the example of St. Paul, who made tents (Acts xviii, 3 and xx, 34), provided their subsistence by manual labour or even by commerce. It is not surprising that abuses arose in consequence: St. Cyprian<sup>4</sup> was scandalised at the commercial operations of certain bishops; the wealth of Paul of Samosata, Bishop of Antioch, led to similar protests, and at the end of the third century, the Council of Elvira (canon 19) forbade bishops, priests and deacons to frequent the markets far and wide in order to carry on business there.

The members of the clergy should of course have a higher ideal and give an example of a life more detached from earthly contingencies. Being charged with the sanctification of others, they were by that very fact called to lead a more holy life; accordingly they were also bound from the early times to fulfil certain moral

<sup>2</sup> Funk-Hemmer, *Histoire de l'Eglise*, Vol. I, p. 87.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *infra*, pp. 1146 *et seq.*

<sup>4</sup> *De lapsis*, iv.

conditions which would distinguish them from the mass of Christians, but these conditions did not then possess the increasing rigour they were to have later on. The epistles to Timothy and Titus had laid it down that a bishop or a deacon should be the husband of only one wife,<sup>5</sup> that is to say, they should be married only once. Neophytes or recent converts, Christians who had undergone public penance, those who had received baptism according to the rite used for the sick,<sup>6</sup> and those who had undergone voluntary mutilation, were likewise excluded in principle from sacred orders. But celibacy was not made obligatory for the clergy in the first centuries; and married men receiving orders did not thereby contract an obligation to observe continence. Nevertheless, very soon the rule prevailed that the higher clergy, bishops, priests and deacons, should not marry after their ordination, unless they returned to the ranks of the laity. The idea of the superiority of continence over marriage and of the desirability of the former in God's ministers was implied in this rule, and it was bound to tend to associate together the ideas of the priesthood and celibacy. As a fairly large number of Christians voluntarily elected to live in this latter state because it was regarded as more pleasing to God, it was natural that the members of the clergy should be recruited from the ranks of such. The custom by spreading was bound to tend towards the establishing of a law. But celibacy was imposed by an express law only at the end of the third or the beginning of the fourth century, and even then it was in fact restricted to one single country. About the year 300,<sup>7</sup> the Council of Illiberis (Elvira), setting forth the discipline of the Church of Spain, made continence an obligation for bishops, priests and deacons (canon 33). But this legislation remained for some time an exception in the universal Church, and twenty-five years later the Council of Nicæa refused to make it general.<sup>8</sup>

### *Ascetics and Virgins*

The current which was carrying many Christians towards asceticism was nevertheless very strong, so much so that those who had decided to live a celibate life and to carry out various kinds of

<sup>5</sup> *Timothy* iii, 2-3; *Titus* i, 5-9.

<sup>6</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xliii. Council of Neocæsarea, canon 12.

<sup>7</sup> On this date, cf. *infra*, p. 1118.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *The Church in the Christian Roman Empire*, Vol. I.



renunciation soon obtained a special position in the Church, even when they did not enter the ranks of the clergy. They were given a special name, the ascetics, ἀσκηταί, or in Latin *continentes*. The life they were leading, though still with their families, was a prelude to that of the monks who became an institution in the Church from the fourth century. Paul of Thebes, who has already been mentioned, was regarded as its founder.<sup>9</sup> There were *continentes* of each sex, and the virgins, *virgines consecratae* or *virgines canonicæ*, according to the expression used of a group of martyrs of Sirmium, at the time of the persecution of Diocletian,<sup>10</sup> were esteemed no less than the male *continentes*.

True, it was from among the female *continentes* that there arose for a time a class of persons less recommendable, those called *virgines subintroductæ*, συνείσακτοι, *agapetae* or companions, who contracted a kind of spiritual marriage with a Christian with whom they dwelt, which sometimes ended up in concubinage. Already in the second century the Church began to condemn so paradoxical a practice because of abuses which took place. The Council of Antioch about 268 made it one of the complaints against Paul of Samosata, and it was likewise envisaged in the 27th canon of the Council of Elvira, which authorised ecclesiastics to retain only their sisters or daughters, and then on condition they were virgins and consecrated to God.<sup>11</sup>

### *The Confessors*

The confessors, courageous Christians who had suffered for the faith in times of persecution but had not had to sacrifice their lives, were also, as is natural, greatly honoured, and we have already seen <sup>12</sup> that in their regard, after the great crises of the third century, it was a question whether they were not usurping the place of the authorities of the Church, for in various places and especially in Africa they arrogated to themselves the right to absolve, by giving certificates restoring to the Christian community the *lapsi* or Christians who had fallen but who were repentant and who, by this

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Vol. III, p. 796.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. *infra*, p. 1198.

<sup>11</sup> On this subject, cf. H. Achelis, *Virgines subintroductæ*, Leipzig, 1902, and the excellent corrective by P. de Labriolle, *Le mariage spirituel dans l'antiquité chrétienne*, in *Revue historique*, Vol. CXXXVII, 1921-1922, pp. 204 et seq.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *supra*, pp. 848 et seq.

very easy method, endeavoured to escape the more or less lengthy period of penance normally required in order to expiate their fault. The idea was that the merits of the best made reparation for the faults of those who were not so good. This might be an application of the "communion of saints" and would appear very touching, if the proud pretensions and rebellious attitude of some confessors had not profoundly vitiated it. In point of fact we have here in another domain something like a reappearance of the tendency so impetuously manifested in Montanism, i.e. the tendency to oppose the "spirituals" to the bishop, and individual charisms to the hierarchy. We know that the episcopal reaction was a strong one, but that the situation called also for prudence, and that the legitimate heads of the churches did not always remain easily masters of the situation.<sup>13</sup> The twenty-fifth canon of the Council of Elvira, which aimed at preventing the faithful from utilising the title of "confessor" in the letters of recommendation often exchanged from church to church, shows that at the end of the third century the bishops still found it necessary to deal with the abusive use of this title.

## § 2. THE GRADES OF HOLY ORDERS

### *The Bishop as the Incarnation of the Church*

In spite of the crisis which for a moment seemed to threaten their authority, the bishops nevertheless remain the sole heads of the churches, of which they are, so to speak, the incarnation. The bishop is the Church: *Ecclesia in episcopo*, wrote St. Cyprian,<sup>1</sup> who in his own diocese of Carthage had been faced with the gravest difficulties arising out of the collusion between confessors and the *lapsi*. Yet it is in Cyprian's actions and writings, and especially in his treatise, *De catholicæ Ecclesiæ unitate*, that we best find the concrete idea of what is meant by a head of a church. The centre of each church, and seat of the *unanimitas* or *consensio* which gives to the assembly of all the faithful who compose it one single mind, is the bishop, who is elected indeed by the people but whose sacred character is conferred on him by God. This character is given by episcopal consecration, which is conferred upon one already ap-

<sup>13</sup> Cf. *supra*, pp. 849 *et seq.*

<sup>1</sup> *Epist.*, xxxiii, 1.

pointed as a bishop. The custom was very soon established whereby the consecrating bishop was assisted by two colleagues, just as the election had to be confirmed by the bishops of the province, headed by the metropolitan, if such officially existed.<sup>2</sup> Once he received this twofold investiture, divine and human, a bishop, as successor of the apostles charged essentially with the maintenance of unity, enjoyed the widest prerogatives. He was the leader of the flock, which owed him obedience, and to which in turn he owed his love, zeal and devotion, together with an example of virtue.

### *Growing Importance of the Office of Priests*

The bishop was still almost the sole official in the Church of the third century. Nevertheless the office of the priests subordinate to him began to grow in importance. The increase of the Christian population in the great cities necessitated the creation of numerous ecclesiastical centres, which would later on be called parishes,<sup>3</sup> and quite naturally priests were set over these. The great persecutions of the third century, on the other hand, by depriving many churches of their bishops, who were compelled to hide themselves or else to suffer martyrdom, and could not always be replaced immediately, led to the members of the presbyteral body taking a much more active part in ecclesiastical government than they had taken previously. But doubtless it was only by degrees, as circumstances rendered necessary a modification of the preceding practice, that those in charge of presbyteral churches added to their former functions, which were those of instructing the faithful, preparing catechumens for baptism, and penitents for reconciliation, the further function of celebrating the eucharistic mysteries, in which originally priests had officiated only conjointly with the bishop.<sup>4</sup>

The territorial division of a single church into sections entrusted in this way to priests, or to be more precise, the multiplication of places of worship under the charge of priests would, in the case of Rome (where these local centres of religious life were known as *tituli*), go back to the second century, if we could believe the *Liber Pontificalis*, which names Pope Evaristus as the originator of this

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *infra*, pp. 1119-1120.

<sup>3</sup> On the evolution of the word *parœcia*, cf. Bk. III, p. 775, and *infra*, p. 1113.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Ch. de Smedt, *L'organisation des églises chrétiennes au IIIe siècle*, in *Revue des Questions historiques*, Vol. L, 1891-1892, pp. 397 et seq.

practice.<sup>5</sup> We are told that this Pope entrusted these churches to the twenty-five Roman priests already ordained by Pope Cletus or Anacletus,<sup>6</sup> the second in succession to St. Peter. But all this sounds very much like legendary detail, especially as the creation of the presbyteral titles is subsequently attributed by the *Liber Pontificalis* itself to two other pontiffs, Urban,<sup>7</sup> the contemporary of Alexander Severus, and about a hundred years later still, Marcellus,<sup>8</sup> immediately after the Diocletian persecution. It is possible that the last-mentioned Pope, who reorganised the Roman Church after the terror, did really establish or re-establish the *tituli* which, in the second hypothesis, would go back at least to the third century, though it would not be possible to determine its foundation in any precise way. In any case, there were already many more than twenty-five priests in Rome in the middle of the third century, for a letter of Pope Cornelius (251-253) mentions forty-six.<sup>9</sup> In Egypt, there were at the beginning of the fourth century, according to the sentence of deposition of the heresiarch Arius, seventeen priests at Alexandria itself, and nineteen in Mareotis, a district which depended immediately upon Alexandria.<sup>10</sup> We may suppose that the numbers were proportional in the other great cities.

### *The Deacons*

The deacons continued, during the period extending from the end of the second century to the Peace of Constantine, to play in the Church the important though subordinate part which we have described in the preceding period.<sup>11</sup> Invested with a liturgical ministry and also with one of charity, they took their part in divine service, watched over the maintenance of external discipline and, under the control of the bishop, occupied themselves with the temporal administration of the community, and especially with the distribution to the poor of the offerings of the faithful.

In several churches, headed by Rome, their number had been

<sup>5</sup> *Liber Pontificalis*, ed. Duchesne, Vol. I, p. 126.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 122.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 143, where we read: "Hic fecit ministeria sacrata omnia argentea constituit et patenas argenteas XXV posuit."

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 164.

<sup>9</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xliii, 11.

<sup>10</sup> Letter from St. Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria (Migne, *P.G.*, Vol. XVIII, 577-581).

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Bk. II, p. 483.

fixed at seven, doubtless in imitation of the "seven deacons" of the church of Jerusalem.<sup>12</sup> Also we find that in Rome the Christian population of the city was divided into seven regions, each having at its head a deacon for its ecclesiastical ministration; this division, possibly following the fourteen administrative divisions of the city grouped in pairs, was thus independent of the division into presbyteral *tituli*. The Liberian Catalogue attributes this foundation of the seven Roman "deaconries" to Pope Fabian, who was elected in 236 and died a victim of the Decian Persecution in 250.<sup>13</sup>

In some churches, and especially at Rome, the first deacon—later on called the archdeacon—occupied quite a prominent place. He was in fact the chief personage in the Christian community after the bishop, and often succeeded him in the see. It was an innovation when, after the death of Pope Fabian in the Decian persecution of 250, the priests having taken over the government of the Church, and the deacons having probably all perished, the priest Cornelius was promoted to the supreme office in 251.<sup>14</sup>

### *The Inferior Orders*

According to the *Liber Pontificalis*, Fabian also instituted seven subdeacons. Whether this statement be correct or not, the assertions of the *Liber* calling for caution, it was certainly in the course of the third century that, below the deacons, there appeared the various inferior orders of clergy. Only one is certainly an earlier institution—the lectors, ἀναγνώσται, who were charged with the public reading of the Scriptures. They were already mentioned by Tertulian about the year 200,<sup>15</sup> also by an apparently earlier inscription in the Roman cemetery of St. Agnes,<sup>16</sup> and earlier still perhaps, by St. Justin.<sup>17</sup> But in the degree that the Christian communities developed, these had to provide themselves with the organs necessary for their functioning. As the authorities hesitated, at least in many of these communities, to increase the number of deacons which had been fixed by the Apostles, it became necessary to institute other clerics, to whom the deacons could hand on less important functions. In this way were created the subdeacons, ὑποδιάκονοι,

<sup>12</sup> Council of Neocæsarea, canon 15.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. *Liber Pontificalis*, ed. Duchesne, Vol. I, p. 149.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. *infra*, p. 1130. See also p. 1140, the case of Pope Dionysius.

<sup>15</sup> *De præscriptione*, xli.

<sup>16</sup> De Rossi, *Bullettino di archeologia cristiana*, Vol. IX, 1871, p. 31.

<sup>17</sup> *Apology*, I, lxvii.

immediate auxiliaries of the deacons, to whom they were expressly subordinated;<sup>18</sup> also the acolytes, not found in the Greek Church, but who seem in the West to have had the mission of helping the subdeacons, who may have become too few for their tasks if their number had, like that of the deacons, been at first limited to seven; then the exorcists, ἐξορκισταί, entrusted with the mission of liberating those possessed by devils; and finally the porters, *ostiarii*, πύλωροι, who guarded the doors of the church. We find all these offices established in Rome in 251, according to a letter from Pope Cornelius to Fabius of Antioch inserted in Eusebius's *History*.<sup>19</sup> But the developed state of this body of auxiliaries of the higher clergy at that moment leads us to think that it cannot have been an altogether recent institution. A document of 303<sup>20</sup> names a last order, that of the diggers, *fossores*, κοπιᾶται, who have left no further trace as an element of the ecclesiastical hierarchy after the fourth century. In the great cities, the instruction of catechumens was confided to catechists, or *doctores audientium*.

### § 3. TERRITORIAL DIVISION OF CHURCHES BEGINNINGS OF PAROCHIAL ORGANISATION

With the increasing diffusion of the Christian faith, new communities began to arise in the neighbourhood of the great cities, in lesser towns, and even, at least in some parts of the East like Asia Minor, where Christianity was more forward, in rural centres also. Religious life in these places had to be assured, and this required the appointment of clergy. Several solutions seem to have been offered for the problem thus presented by the extension of the Gospel of the Kingdom beyond the limits in which it was necessarily confined when it was first preached.

#### *Territorial Unity of the Church. The Principal Church and the Secondary Centres*

Adhering to the conception and primitive practice whereby there was no church without a bishop, sole depositary of the priesthood

<sup>18</sup> 'Τπηρεταί εἰσι διακόνων (Apostolic Constitutions, viii, 28).

<sup>19</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xliii.

<sup>20</sup> *Gesta purificationis Cæciliani* (Migne, P.L., Vol. VIII, 731). Two laws of the Emperor Constantius (*Cod. Theod.*, XIII, i, 1, and XVI, 2, 15) expressly include the *copiatæ* among the clergy.

and the one minister of liturgical life as a whole, a particular Christian community naturally found it necessary quite early to determine its territorial limits. It was necessary that the faithful who dwelt in the various parts of this territory should be able, without having to make a long journey, to visit the principal church in which were celebrated the chief offices of worship presided over by the bishop. Even so, within this territory itself there were formed, as needs dictated, secondary districts under the control of priests. But the assemblies over which these presided had at first a catechetical rather than a properly religious character, and so it sometimes happened that a simple deacon fulfilled this office. The circumstances we have already mentioned brought about a further development, whereby the various priests came to take the place of the bishop to a certain extent in the portion of ecclesiastical territory placed in their care, and these districts became so many "parishes."

This first arrangement was made quite naturally in the suburbs of great cities, whence the faithful could easily get to the central church, and which the bishop could himself visit with sufficient ease. Thus, the district of Mareotis in Egypt, which possessed an important number of priests, remained towards the end of the third century an ecclesiastical dependency of Alexandria, governed directly by the bishop of that city.<sup>1</sup>

The activity of these priests, set, as needs required, over various parts of an episcopal diocese possessing Christian groups outside the urban agglomeration which formed its centre, could be exercised in two different ways. The priests might be residents, or itinerant or visiting clergy.

### *Visiting or Travelling Priests in some Regions*

Those belonging to the itinerant category were given the name of *periodeutai* or, in Latin, *circumeuntes*. A letter of St. Phileas, Bishop of Thmuis in Lower Egypt, written about 307,<sup>2</sup> and the 57th of the Laodicean Canons, which are of uncertain date,<sup>3</sup> mention their existence. We gather from the first of these texts that St.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 1109.

<sup>2</sup> Migne, P.G., Vol. X, 1566.

<sup>3</sup> On the Canons of Laodicea, cf. *The Church in the Christian Roman Empire*. The 57th Canon of Laodicea deals with a situation which may have been posterior to the fourth century.

Phileas regarded the ministry of these visiting priests as sufficient for the spiritual needs of Christians living away from the seat of the bishop, and did not consider it necessary to install among them priests with fixed posts.

*Elsewhere, Residential Priests. Beginnings of the Parochial Organization*

On the other hand, in cases where Christians were found at fairly considerable distances from an episcopal see, and no other bishop was placed at their head—a situation which seems to have lasted till the middle of the third century in Upper Italy and in Gaul<sup>4</sup> (where the Christians of Autun and of Châlons-sur-Saône, for instance, depended at first on the Bishop of Lyons)—we may well believe that it became necessary to appoint residential priests; hence these *παροίκια* or parishes in Gaul mentioned by Eusebius.<sup>5</sup> But it is not impossible that this organization of the parochial system may have begun before the fourth century, even among Christian communities much nearer to the episcopal centre. For instance, it is difficult to say whether the priests of the Mareotis were *circumeuntes* or country parish priests.<sup>6</sup>

Again, we are unable to determine the precise time and conditions of the transformation of these ministers, at first charged mainly with catechetical instruction, preparation for the sacraments, and preaching, into liturgical ministers, celebrating the Holy Sacrifice in the churches of small towns and villages just as the bishop did in his cathedral. We have already said that the great persecutions of the third century must have helped to bring about this result, by depriving churches of their bishops often for fairly lengthy periods. But even prior to that time, we find it difficult to imagine that priests charged with the care of new Christian communities as far distant from the episcopal seat as Autun, for instance, was from Lyons, did not already celebrate the sacred mysteries.

In such a case, the continuance of the regime whereby simple priests were put at the head of Christian communities in towns far away from the episcopal see was doubtless due to the numerical weakness of these Christian groups. As soon as they began to in-

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Bk. III, pp. 774 *et seq.* and 783-785.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Bk. III, p. 774.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. the discussion in Ch. de Smedt, *L'organisation des églises chrétiennes au IIIe siècle*, in *Revue des Questions historiques*, Vol. L, 1891-1892, pp. 410 *et seq.*



crease, it would be natural and almost obligatory that they should be given a bishop of their own, and in this way we should tend towards the system which seems to have been established in Gaul from the fourth century, namely, a bishop for each city, though this did not necessarily involve a strict correspondence in the geographical arrangements of the civil and ecclesiastical administrations.

### *In other Countries, a Multiplication of Bishoprics*

Side by side with the institution of the itinerant clergy and priests with fixed posts, we find another way of ensuring the spiritual life of communities outside the urban centres (provided these were sufficiently important in themselves or by reason of their Christian population to be raised at an early stage into episcopal sees), namely, the multiplication of bishoprics. We find this in peninsular Italy, and still more in Africa where, if not in the third century at least beginning with the fourth, there was an almost incredible number of episcopal sees: Councils called on the occasion of the Donatist schism after the Diocletian persecution<sup>7</sup> reveal several hundred bishops in a territory smaller than Gaul. Bishops were thus found in very small towns and even in mere villages. Nevertheless by the powers they exercised within their modest boundaries they were equal to the bishops of the greatest cities.

### *The Chorepiscopi*

In other countries, as in various provinces in Asia, the bishops of localities altogether secondary, and the rural bishops, were not unreasonably regarded as of inferior rank. Their relative lowliness was expressed by a special name given to them, that of "country bishops" or *chorepiscopi*, χωρας ἐπισκοποι, ἐπισκοποι ἐν ταῖς κώραις, ἢ ταῖς χώραις, as they are called in conciliar texts.<sup>8</sup> They are evidently identical with the ἐπισκοποι τῶν ἀγρῶν mentioned by Eusebius.<sup>9</sup> The earliest to be mentioned is a certain Zoticus, Bishop of

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *infra*, p. 1203, and *The Church in the Christian Roman Empire*.

<sup>8</sup> Council of Antioch of 341, Canon 10. On the *chorepiscopi*, cf. Dom Parisot, *Les chorévêques*, in *Revue de l'Orient chrétien*, Vol. VI, 1901, pp. 157 et seq.; P. M. Jugie, *Les chorévêques en Orient*, in *Echos d'Orient*, Vol. VII, 1904, pp. 263 et seq.; H. Bergère, *Étude historique sur les chorévêques*, Paris, 1905, and above all F. Gillmann, *Das Institut der Chorbischofe im Orient. Historisch-kanonistische Studie*, in *Veröffentlichungen aus dem Kirchenhistorischen Seminar*, 2nd series, fasc. 1, Munich, 1903.

<sup>9</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxx.

the village of Kumana in Phrygia, named by Eusebius in his account of the beginnings of Montanism (second half of the second century).<sup>10</sup>

It is true, of course, that apart from the difference in name, the *chorepiscopi* of these early times were bishops no less than the others, and those of the villages of Asia Minor and Syria had more or less the same position as the bishops of the African villages, or the bishops set over the small towns in the immediate neighbourhood of Rome, hence called "suburbican" sees.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless it is probable that the *chorepiscopi* were from the first subordinate to the bishop of the city which was the centre of the territory a portion of which they governed.

A day was bound to come very soon when it was considered that these rural bishops, too numerous perhaps to offer in every case sufficient guarantees of their worth, might lower the religious prestige of the episcopate, and their powers were progressively diminished by a series of Councils in the fourth century. Eventually they ceased to possess the episcopal character, and this was a prelude to the total suppression of the institution.<sup>12</sup>

### *Two Chief Types of Organisation. Countries with many Bishoprics, and Countries with a Parochial Organisation*

Henceforward there will only be two types of ecclesiastical organisation in the various churches. Some countries like Africa and peninsular Italy will always display a superabundance of bishoprics,

<sup>10</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, V, xvi, 17.

<sup>11</sup> The title of *chorepiscopus* was only exceptionally used in Christian antiquity in the West. A *chorepiscopus* Eugraphus figures in an inscription of Salona, *Corpus inscriptionum latinarum*, III, 9547, and the Council of Riez in Gaul in 439 reduced to the status of *chorepiscopus* a certain Armentarius who had been consecrated Bishop of Embrun contrary to the canons; but this title merely gave him precedence over other priests. Cf. J. Zeiller, *Le chorévêque Eugraphus, Note sur le choréépiscopat en Occident au V. siècle*, in *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique*, Vol. VII, 1906, pp. 27 *et seq.* We find, however, in connection with the quarrel which broke out about the year 400 between the episcopal sees of Southern Gaul, that very small places in the region of Marseilles, Gargonius and Citharista, had bishops depending on that of the neighbouring great city. These may have been *chorepiscopi* without the name. On these conflicts see *The Church in the Christian Roman Empire*. *Chorepiscopi* reappeared in Frankish Gaul in the Carolingian period, but these *chorepiscopi* were rather co-bishops, coadjutors of the bishop who was the head of the diocese. On *chorepiscopi* in the West, cf. Th. Gottlob, *Der abendländische Chorepiskopat*, in *Kanonistische Studien und Texte*, herausgeg. von A. Koeniger, Vol. I, Bonn, 1928.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *The Church in the Christian Roman Empire*.

episcopal sees being installed in very small towns, but not in mere villages. Elsewhere there will be fewer bishoprics, as in Upper Italy, Gaul, Britain, Spain, Illyricum, and under the authority of bishops thus possessing a more extensive territorial jurisdiction we shall find a multiplication of simple parishes entrusted to priests. In several countries things tend towards the establishment of a bishop in each civil city, as was the case, though not without exception, in Gaul from the fourth century. But there was never strict correspondence between the civil and religious organisation, and certainly this was not to be found at the end of the third century. And even in this same third century we find in Spain one single bishop governing the faithful of the two churches of Legio (Leon) and Asturica (Astorga).<sup>13</sup> The Province of Scythia, which contained several cities, never possessed any bishop besides that of the provincial capital, Tomi. In the "European" province in Thrace, there were at the beginning of the fifth century only four bishops, each governing the Christian population of two cities.<sup>14</sup>

#### § 4. RELATIONS BETWEEN THE CHURCHES BROTHERHOOD AND RANK

##### *The Mother Churches*

It was natural that the bishops of small places, instituted originally by the bishop of more important urban centres, should remain in a certain relation of subordination to the latter, and this might lead one to think that the same would apply in a more general way to every daughter church, even when established in a large town, in relation to its mother church. But in reality the mother church retained rather a moral pre-eminence. Yet sometimes its bishop functioned to a certain point as the head of the episcopate in that particular region. Such was the Bishop of Carthage in relation to the Church of Africa. But this was not the case everywhere. In general, we may say that in the third century we still find the idea of a brotherhood of churches rather than that of a hierarchical system. This brotherhood continued to express itself in exchanges of letters, *litteræ formatæ*, in various circumstances, by which the churches testified that they were in communion with one another.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Bk. III, pp. 780, 794.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. the list of bishops at the Council of Ephesus.

### *Necessity of an Organic Connection*

It was very necessary, however, that their mutual relations should be regulated in some manner. In point of fact, we find during the first four centuries in the history of the Church various attempts, some more or less deliberate and others more or less spontaneous, from the human point of view, to express in some concrete way this bond between the churches, in order to show their basic unity, and even to realise this organically.

### *The Councils*

One of the modes of unification, or more exactly perhaps, one of the most natural external manifestations of the pre-existing invisible unity, would be the meeting together of representatives of different churches assembling to discuss questions which called for an exchange of ideas, and in some cases, common decisions. In point of fact, the first councils or synods known to history were the result of the Montanist heresy. "The faithful of Asia," wrote Apollinaris of Hierapolis, quoted by Eusebius,<sup>1</sup> "assembled often, in numerous parts of this country: they examined the recent doings of the innovators, showed their profane character, and after condemning the heresy they expelled the innovators from the church and denied them communion." The rest of the account of Eusebius shows us that bishops assembled also in Thrace in order to excommunicate the Montanists.<sup>2</sup> This took place in the reign of Marcus Aurelius.

Fifteen or twenty years later, the Paschal controversy led to new episcopal assemblies. Eusebius tells us<sup>3</sup> that there was still extant in his day the synodical letters of the following: the bishops of Palestine gathered together under the presidency of Theophilus of Cæsarea and Narcissus of Jerusalem;<sup>4</sup> the bishops assembled at Rome under Pope Victor; the bishops of Pontus presided over by Palmas; the Christian communities of Gaul which, it is true, apart from the Narbonnaise apparently had at that time no bishop besides Irenæus; the bishops of Osrhoene; the Greek episcopate; and that of Asia which, as we know,<sup>5</sup> continued for a time to defend its own view concerning the celebration of Easter.

<sup>1</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, V, xvi, 10.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, V, xix, 3-4.

<sup>3</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, V, xxiii, 2.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Bk. III, p. 764.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Bk. III, pp. 717 *et seq.*

In the third century also synods were called, especially in order to settle problems arising out of the persecution or the appearance of heresies. We find them, for instance, in Italy, under the presidency of the Roman bishop, and also in Africa, where the bishops were grouped around the Bishop of Carthage, as they may have been since before the end of the second century.<sup>6</sup> About the year 300, the Council of Elvira was held in Spain: we infer this approximate date from the fact that several of the members of the Council were present also at that of Arles in 314, and that Hosius of Cordova, who died a centenarian in 357, was likewise there.<sup>7</sup> The disciplinary canons enacted at Elvira, the earliest we possess, do not indicate that they deal with cases peculiar to the Spanish Church, but rather seem to set forth rules applying to Christians as a whole, though in point of fact this Council legislated only for Spain.

Thus, until the fourth century there was no general or œcumenical council formed of representatives of the whole Church. Indeed, it would be difficult to imagine an assembly of this kind taking place previous to the peace of the Church: the first œcumenical council will be that of Nicæa under the Emperor Constantine. Until then we know only of provincial or regional councils, but these tended, at least in some parts of the Church, to become a regular institution. We see from the correspondence exchanged between St. Cyprian of Carthage and St. Firmilian of Cæsarea on the occasion of the baptismal controversy that in several countries such as Africa or Asia Minor, the bishops of particular provinces were accustomed in the third century to meet together in council annually, or even twice a year.

We must also add that when questions arose which concerned the whole Church, agreement could be manifested by the provincial synods held everywhere simultaneously in order to deal with the same subject. Thus the synods held because of the Easter controversy brought out the unanimous view of the churches, with the

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Bk. III, pp. 780-782, pp. 850-851, and *infra*, pp. 1136 *et seq.*

<sup>7</sup> Contrary to what has been sometimes said, there is nothing in the canons of Elvira to indicate that they were enacted immediately after a persecution. Cf. L. Duchesne, *Le concile d'Elvire et les flamines chrétiens*, in *Mélanges Renier*, Paris, 1887 (*Bibliothèque de l'Ecole pratique des Hautes Etudes, Section des Sc. hist. et philolog.*, fasc. 73, pp. 159-173). There is an abundant literature on the Council of Elvira, particulars of which will be found, prior to 1907, in Hefele-Leclercq, *Histoire des Conciles*, Vol. I, p. 212, n. 4. The *History of P. García Villada, Historia ecclesiastica de España*, II: *El cristianismo durante la dominacion romana*, adds nothing of interest.

exception of those of Asia. True, there arose then the difficulty of bringing the latter to adopt the practice which had prevailed everywhere else, and this result was not produced by means of councils. The provincial synods could usefully act as a guide to the Church, but they themselves needed the control and sanction of a higher authority if and when they did not succeed of themselves to ensure unity.

*Beginnings of Hierarchical System: de facto Primacies and Future Metropolitan Sees*

In various regions, on the other hand, some spontaneous attempts at a hierarchical organisation indicate a certain realisation of ecclesiastical unity in territories of more or less considerable extent, but nevertheless always limited. Churches which owed their foundation to another naturally attributed to the latter a certain superiority, but as a mother church was very often situated in the most important city in the province which had naturally been the object of its missionary efforts, the position of these mother churches naturally coincided with the metropolitan cities of the provinces. This prepared the way for the institution of metropolitan sees, which incidentally do not seem to have been established as an actual and official institution before the fourth century, and even then only in the East at first. The bishop of the chief city of the province, ἐπαρχία, was the metropolitan, who had a pre-eminence over his colleagues in other cities, with the right to confirm their election and often the prerogative of conferring episcopal consecration upon them. We gather from the proceedings of councils that in some countries this supremacy was exercised, not by the bishop of the provincial metropolis, but by the oldest in age or office among the bishops of the province, and to him was given the name of "primate." This was the case in Northern Africa (except in the Proconsular Province, where the primate was always the bishop of the metropolis, Carthage), in Bithynia, at least for some time, and perhaps also in Spain.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> It may be that it is these primates or seniors, the oldest in age or episcopate—unless indeed it is the antiquity of the see itself which is in question—who are envisaged in canon 58 of the Council of Elvira, which lays it down that the verification of letters of communion of representatives of a church, in course of a journey, is to be made above all by the first episcopal see—"maxime in eo loco in quo prima cathedra constituta est episcopatus." This "prima cathedra

But equally there began to be formed some more extended ecclesiastical groupings, and these were doubtless due both to the circumstances of evangelisation and to the geographical and administrative conditions with which they were connected. Thus the different provinces of Northern Africa, and no longer the single Proconsular Province only, were grouped under the higher authority of the first bishop in this province, namely the Bishop of Carthage, whom we find from the third century always presiding over the regional synods consisting of bishops of his own province, Numidia and Mauretania.<sup>9</sup> All Egypt and Cyrenaica, which comprised several civil provinces, depended upon the Bishop of Alexandria, and peninsular Italy on the Bishop of Rome. Antioch seems similarly to have had a preponderant position in the whole East apart from Asia Minor, for in 325 the Council of Nicæa recognised this state of affairs,<sup>10</sup> as it recognised also the position of the Bishop of Alexandria, mentioning in this connection the traditional prerogatives of Rome.<sup>11</sup> These sees superior to the provincial metropolitans will later on be called patriarchates in the case of the greatest, and exarchates or primacies in the case of the lesser.

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episcopatus" seems to correspond to the "prima sedes," the seat of the senior bishop of the province of Africa. P. Batiffol, *La prima cathedra episcopatus du concile d'Elvire*, in *Journal of Theol. Studies*, Vol. XXIII, 1922, pp. 263 *et seq.*, and Vol. XXVI, 1925, pp. 45 *et seq.*, has endeavored to prove that the "prima cathedra episcopatus" signifies the see of Rome, in accordance with the expression we find in the Spanish fifth century poet, Prudentius, who, speaking of the apostle Peter in *Peristephanon*, II, 459, says: "cathedram possidens primam." But this interpretation seems to go beyond the ecclesiastical perspectives of the Council of Elvira, which, moreover, does not display any preoccupation with the central authority or with a first episcopal see of the universal Church. Furthermore, if Rome was envisaged, why the use of this expression, which seems capable of signifying several places? Cf. against Batiffol, A. Jüllicher, *Die Synode von Elvira als Zeuge für den römischen Primat*, in *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, Vol. XLII, 1923, pp. 44 *et seq.*, and L. von Sybel, *Die Synode von Elvira*, *ibid.*, pp. 243 *et seq.* The latter even sees opposition to Rome in canon 36 of the Council against images, an opposition which moreover, according to Batiffol, would not exclude a recognition of the Roman primacy viewed as a primacy of foundation.

<sup>9</sup> St. Cyprian himself refused to allow that there is any hierarchy among bishops: his opening discourse at the Council of Carthage in 256 (*Sententiæ episcoporum numero LXXXVII de hæreticis baptizandis*, ed. Hartel in *Vienna Corpus*, Vol. III, 1-2; *Cyprian, op.*, 1-2, p. 435) is very clear in this sense. But his theoretical declarations, though perfectly sincere, are one thing, and his actual practice, resulting almost from the force of events themselves, is another. In point of fact the Bishop of Carthage always acted as the head of the African episcopate.

<sup>10</sup> Canon 6.

<sup>11</sup> Ἐπειδὴ καὶ τῷ ἐν τῇ 'Ρώμῃ ἐπισκόπῳ τοῦτο συνηθὲς ἐστίν.

Elsewhere we do not find in the course of the third century a tendency towards a similar hierarchical arrangement of bishoprics. In Celtic Gaul, the see of Lyons seems not to have retained all the importance which it had in the nature of things by reason of its original position, although we find about the year 250 the Bishop of Lyons acting as the representative of the episcopate of his province.<sup>12</sup> In the Narbonne country, in the same period, no see seems to have held a preponderating place. When, on the occasion of the Novatian schism in the middle of the third century, a Bishop of Arles was deposed, his Gallic colleagues showed a readiness to let Rome intervene directly in his replacement, a very significant indication of the absence of any superior episcopal authority in their own country.<sup>13</sup>

In brief, before the peace of the Church, the provincial organisation was still somewhat loose; it was in a nascent state, and would develop by a natural evolution.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *infra*, pp. 1136-1137.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. *infra*, p. 1137.



THE ROMAN SEE<sup>1</sup>

AS YET, no general council of the Church had been called, and hence above the provincial organisation we have just described, there was only "the very lively sentiment of Christian unity, and the special authority of the Roman Church"<sup>2</sup> which constituted an expression of this.

It was an authority felt rather than defined, in the first place. But we have seen how it had taken shape already in the first two centuries, and had been recognised by prominent witnesses to Christian thought and feeling.

The history of the Church of Rome from the end of the second century to the beginning of the fourth will show us how its authority developed.

## § I. THE PAPACY FROM VICTOR TO CALLISTUS

*Pope Victor*

Already in the pontificate of the immediate successor to Pope Eleutherius, Pope Victor (189-199), the activity of the Roman See had a prominence which, apart from the intervention of St. Clement at Corinth,<sup>3</sup> had not been specially manifested previously. The pontificate of Victor was a very important one. It was then that Greek ceased to be the sole official language of the Roman Church.

<sup>1</sup> Bibliography.—The same as for ch. XI, augmented by the works mentioned in the notes to the present chapter.

[To these works we must add *The Church and the Papacy: A Historical Study*, being the Bampton Lectures given at the University of Oxford in 1942, by the Rev. T. G. Jalland, D.D. (London, S.P.C.K., 1944). This is noteworthy because it is characterised by a very close approach to the traditional Catholic positions, in the matter of the evidence from Scripture and early Tradition for the supreme authority of Peter and his successors in the See of Rome. Thus, on the much discussed question of St. Cyprian's attitude to the Primacy, Dr. Jalland accepts the conclusions reached by Fr. Bévenot in his recent study of the Cyprianic MSS. concerning the priority of the "Roman" text of the *De unitate*. He holds also that the weaker text is equally authentic, and that the modification was due to the disagreement with Pope Stephen on the baptismal controversy. Dr. Jalland's work should be consulted for details on this and other features of the development of the authority of the Roman See in the early Church.—Tr.]

<sup>2</sup> Duchesne, *Histoire ancienne de l'Eglise*, Vol. I, p. 536.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Bk. II, pp. 412, 488-490.

It was gradually replaced by Latin, which Victor himself wrote,<sup>4</sup> being perhaps of African origin.<sup>5</sup> This fact itself shows the progress of the Latin element in the Christian community in Rome, which had hitherto been more Greek or Oriental than Latin. The growing influence of the Latin spirit is also shown in the progress of the Church's organisation, as shown in the Roman synods summoned on the occasion of the affair of Theodotus and of the Easter question,<sup>6</sup> and also in the relations with the other churches, many of which held councils at the request of the Roman bishop. In short, this pontificate was an epoch-making one, and we may say that with Victor, more than with any of his predecessors, the Roman bishop already acts as Pope.

The strong and even somewhat severe manner in which he tried to compel the Asiatics to adopt the Roman usage in fixing the date of the Easter celebration, which was also that of the majority of churches, led to opposition and difficulties, as we have already explained,<sup>7</sup> but even so it gives us a clear indication of the idea the Roman bishop already had of his own right—a right which he regarded as naturally resulting from a duty—to give to the collectivity of churches general directions in matters of discipline as in matters of faith. Already at the end of the second century Rome shows a consciousness of its mission, which it carries out with a directness and a sense of sureness which are altogether striking.

Against this, it is true, we must mention the very definite protests to which the action of Victor gave rise. But, as we have been able to show, these voices were raised in the name of charity and for the sake of brotherhood, the sense of which was so vivid in the Church of these early times, and they did not deny Rome's right to act, either because they did not take this into consideration but regarded the matter from another point of view, or else because they did not question it.

### *Zephyrinus and Callistus. The Theological Controversies*

Victor's successor, Pope Zephyrinus (199-217), and the Pope who in turn succeeded him, Callistus (217-222), who seems to have

<sup>4</sup> St. Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, liii, regards Victor as the first of the Christian Latin writers.

<sup>5</sup> According to the *Liber Pontificalis*.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Bk. III, pp. 722, 728 *et seq.*

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Bk. III, pp. 722 *et seq.*

been originally his chief deacon, were opposed, this time from the standpoint of doctrine, by the leader of the Roman clergy who had devoted himself to theological studies and had philosophised on dogma, the priest St. Hippolytus.<sup>8</sup> But it was precisely the peculiar character of his own speculations which put him in opposition to the two Popes, who were guardians of pure doctrine by reason of their office, and who refused to interpret this doctrine in accordance with the ideas of a particular school. We have already seen<sup>9</sup> that in the theological conflicts which had begun to take place at this time, resulting from discussions on the Trinity, and in opposition both to the Monarchians who stressed the divine unity, and to the champions of the doctrine of the Logos, who emphasized the distinction of persons but usually displayed a tendency towards Subordinationism, Zephyrinus and Callistus, rightly fearing these tendencies, were not willing to pronounce in favour of the doctrine of the Logos as it was then being formulated. Hippolytus considered that in acting thus, or rather in abstaining from action, the two Roman bishops had not defended the true faith as they should have done; he made a schism, and criticised his opponents in the book which has been called, though wrongly, the *Philosophumena*.<sup>10</sup>

It is certainly noteworthy that when, after the death of Zephyrinus, Callistus and Hippolytus were rival candidates for the succession, Callistus won the day. Hippolytus was forced to become an anti-pope. He had on his side the reputation of his learning and his literary gifts, and perhaps also his own personal position. Nevertheless the Church gave its preference to a freedman, much less cultivated but at the same time a confessor, a strong man and a good administrator.

Callistus, however (if we are to believe Hippolytus, who had no good word for him), had had a somewhat stormy past, which may have cost him some votes. As an old slave, he had carried out for his master certain transactions which had not turned out well; being in difficulties with his creditors, he had turned on his own debtors, among whom there were some Jews; these had denounced him as a Christian, and in consequence he had been sent to the mines in

<sup>8</sup> Cf. A. d'Alès, *La théologie de saint Hippolyte*, Paris, 1906, and Vol. III, p. 578, n. 4.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Bk. III, pp. 730 *et seq.*

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Bk. III, pp. 735 *et seq.*

Sardinia. Returning from imprisonment when peace was re-established under Commodus, he had lived in retreat at Antium. Pope Zephyrinus, who had doubtless recognised his abilities in spite of all that had happened, had caused him to return and had made him chief deacon. Being thus charged with the temporal administration of the Church, he transferred the official cemetery of the Roman community from the neighbourhood of the Via Salaria (where the Acilii Glabrones had put their land at the disposal of their brethren,<sup>11</sup> and where there had been formed what was called after that time the Catacomb of Priscilla) to the crypts of Lucina on the Apian Way.<sup>12</sup> This cemetery, which had been increased by his care, was called after him the "cemetery of Callistus," although he was not himself buried there like his successors. It was also called "the cemetery," because it became the chief one of the Roman Christian community.

Having become Pope after Zephyrinus, and having been in this way preferred to Hippolytus, Callistus was bound to meet with still stronger opposition from his rival. The opposition developed into a schism, which was nevertheless brought to an end by a common persecution. After the pontificate of Callistus, his successor Pontian was deported into Sardinia, in virtue of the edict of Maximin the Thracian, at the same time as Hippolytus himself. The two confessors were reconciled to each other, and Hippolytus was honoured as a martyr. His memory was cherished in the church of Rome, and Christians there retained a statue which his admirers had erected to him during his lifetime.<sup>13</sup>

This reconciliation, which put an end to the schism, may be regarded as a retractation on the part of Hippolytus, who had not only separated from the legitimate bishop but had accused him of not safeguarding the faith. His return to unity seems to imply a withdrawal of his accusations. But should we infer from these accusations that, for Hippolytus, the Pope might err in matters doctrinal? Our information concerning Hippolytus does not settle the question formulated in such precise terms, which correspond indeed to a state of development of Christian thought later than his time. Moreover, Hippolytus reproached Zephyrinus and Callistus less for

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Bk. II, p. 524.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> It can be seen in the Lateran Museum. But the head is modern.

explicit errors than for their silence and passivity in presence of doctrines which he himself regarded as pernicious, or else for their reserve towards doctrines which he himself regarded as correct.<sup>14</sup>

### *The Disciplinary Conflict*

Callistus, indeed, was the subject of attacks by Hippolytus for another reason. As he had moderated the early severity of penitential discipline,<sup>15</sup> a rigorist opposition accused him through the mouth of Hippolytus of an unworthy weakness. Tertullian, with his usual asperity, took part in this attack upon the supposed laxity of Rome, although the *episcopus episcoporum* and the *summus pontifex* to whom he ironically refers<sup>16</sup> may perhaps designate not Callistus but the Bishop of Carthage, Agrippinus, who had adopted the same disciplinary practice. Despite the violence of a few opponents, the indulgent attitude of Rome, which in any case did not amount to laxity, prevailed everywhere. Tertullian indeed might, in the Montanist phase of his career, in which the true Church was for him no longer the hierarchical one but the Church of the spirituals, deny that the hierarchy possessed the power of binding and loosing. But that was the denial of a man who no longer belonged to the "great Church."

Nevertheless, an attempt has been made to find in this, by a kind of unexpected reaction, the starting point for the claim to the primacy on the part of the bishops of Rome. Such is the paradoxical thesis recently set forth by Erich Caspar in his *Geschichte des Papsttums*,<sup>17</sup> who traces back to the polemics which followed the edict of Callistus Rome's belief in her own superior authority. Tertullian, attacking the edict in his *De pudicitia*, says in ch. xxi that the bishop had arrogated to himself the power of loosing because he thought that the words addressed to Peter applied to himself. Tertullian rejects the application, refusing as a Montanist, for such he was already, the power of binding and loosing to the Church represented by the episcopate, and attributing it only to the Church of the spirituals. According to Caspar, however, the reasoning at

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Bk. III, pp. 735 *et seq.*

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Bk. III, pp. 709 *et seq.*, and A. d'Alès, *L'Edit de Calliste* indicated *ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Bk. III, p. 710.

<sup>17</sup> Vol. I, pp. 26-27.

tributed by Tertullian to Callistus sufficed to give to Rome, which did not previously possess it, the idea of a primacy founded upon the succession of the Roman bishops from St. Peter.

What an arbitrary hypothesis! In the passage of the *De pudicitia* referred to there is nothing to show that Tertullian attributed to Callistus, if he is really the person referred to,<sup>18</sup> a fictitious argument, or that he did more than state quite simply that Callistus appealed definitely to the *Tu es Petrus* and to the power of loosing entrusted to Peter.<sup>19</sup> Also, it seems *a priori* very unlikely, to say no more, and to use no other arguments, that Rome, in which the memory of the Apostle was kept so much alive, had to learn from Africa that the *Tu es Petrus* had placed it in possession of a special authority of which Peter was the source.

<sup>18</sup> One of the texts most discussed in connection with the famous penitential edict is a passage in the *De pudicitia* (xxi, 9), in which Tertullian, addressing the bishop he is criticising, says: "Si, quia dixerat Petro Dominus: 'Super hanc petram . . .' vel: 'Quaecumque alligaveris' . . . idcirco præsumis et ad te derivasse solvendi et alligandi potestatem, id est, ad omnem ecclesiam Petri propinquam . . ." This phrase seems to P. Galtier (*Le véritable édit de Calliste*, in *Revue d'histoire ecclési.*, Vol. XXIII, 1927, pp. 465 *et seq.*) to exclude the identification of the author of the edict with a direct successor of St. Peter, inasmuch as it seems to refer to a church related, like all (omnem ecclesiam) those which conserve the apostolic faith, to that of Peter. But Harnack (*Ecclesia Petri propinqua: Zur geschichte der Anfänge des Primats des römischen Bischofs*, in *Sitzungsberichte der preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, Philos.-histor. Klasse Vol. XVIII, 1927, pp. 139 *et seq.*) has suggested an ingenious correction: "ad romanam ecclesiam Petri propinquam." In this hypothesis, there would indeed be question of the Roman Church itself, which is "near to Peter" because established near his tomb. And this would be yet another affirmation, and a very interesting one, of the tradition concerning the Roman burial of St. Peter. But this rather materialistic interpretation of "Petri propinqua," as P. Galtier has pointed out in another article (*Ecclesia Petri propinqua. A propos de Tertullien et de Calliste*, in *Revue d'hist. ecclési.*, Vol. XXIV, 1928, pp. 40 *et seq.*), is scarcely in harmony with the spirit of Tertullian; the conception of a spiritual connection between all churches which have conserved the faith of Peter is more likely to be correct, and has the additional advantage of not depending on a correction of the text, a proceeding to which we should have recourse only when compelled to do so.

<sup>19</sup> It is interesting to notice that Caspar's theory found an immediate and resolute critic in a writer who nevertheless is one of the most convinced opponents of the Roman primacy: Hugo Koch, a specialist, if we may use the term, on St. Cyprian, whose difficult texts he always interprets in the sense of an episcopalianism altogether opposed to any conception of the supremacy of the Roman See. In his *Cathedra Petri* (Giessen, 1930) Koch expressly rejects the hypothesis of the so-called argument attributed by Tertullian to Callistus, which the Roman Church is supposed to have appropriated, and he concludes that the *De pudicitia* has nothing to do with the origins of the Roman primacy.

*Prestige of the Roman See*

In any case, the vehement attacks which men like Hippolytus or Tertullian directed against the Roman bishops, who were accused of not showing themselves sufficiently vigorous in the defence of the faith or of morals, and were criticised even for decisions agreeable to the spirit of the Gospel, such as that by which Callistus recognised as valid in the eyes of the Church marriages of women of senatorial rank with freedmen,<sup>20</sup> constitute in reality a species of homage rendered to the authority of the Roman See, which these Popes were accused of compromising. The epoch in which these significant accusations were made was also that in which another kind of testimony was rendered to the Roman See. St. Zephyrinus might be a man of mediocre intellect: yet Origen nevertheless made a journey to Rome to visit him,<sup>21</sup> experiencing like so many others the attraction of the centre of ecclesiastical life of the Christian world.

Naturally he saw there Hippolytus also, and he even heard a homily given by him before his secession from the Church. This schism did not take place until the time of Callistus, as we have seen,<sup>22</sup> but it continued after his death. Callistus died in 222, under Alexander Severus, in a period of peace for the Church. Nevertheless he has been included among the martyred popes.<sup>23</sup> Did he perish "in some scuffle between Christians and pagans, not as a result of any regular process? His memory was localised in Rome, from the first half of the fourth century, in two places: in the Trastevere, where Pope Julius built a basilica, *Sancta Maria in Trastevere juxta Callistum*, and on the Aurelian Way, where his tomb is found. It is strange that he should be buried there, so far from the cemetery administered by him, which still bears his name and which received the mortal remains of all his colleagues of the third century. The popular tumult which may explain his death might also explain, if we accept the tradition of the legend which puts the incident in the Trastevere, the reason why he was buried on the Aurelian Way. For that would be the cemetery nearest the place where he was put to death, according to the story."

<sup>20</sup> Hippolytus, *Philosophumena*, IX, 11.

<sup>21</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xiv, 10.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 1124.

<sup>23</sup> He appears under the 14th Oct., in the Philocalian Table of the *Depositiones martyrum*.

<sup>24</sup> Duchesne, *Histoire ancienne de l'Eglise*, Vol. I, p. 320, note.

## § 2. THE PAPACY FROM CALLISTUS TO SIXTUS II

*Pope Urban I*

Callistus was succeeded by Urban, whose pontificate lasted from 222 to 230.<sup>1</sup> According to the *Liber Pontificalis*, it was characterised by the institution of the twenty-five presbyteral "titles" in Rome; but in the absence of any confirmation of this from any other source, we can only hesitate, to say no more, to accept a statement which has no better guarantee.

*Pope Pontian*

Pontian, who succeeded Urban, was, together with Hippolytus still functioning as an anti-pope, involved in the persecution of Maximin which brought about their reconciliation. They were both condemned to the mines of Sardinia, and died there after they had made peace with each other. Hippolytus in his last moments exhorted his followers to join the rest of the faithful. The bodies of these two leaders were taken back to Rome and buried there on the same day, Pontian in the cemetery of Callistus in the crypt of the popes, and Hippolytus on the Via Tiburtina.

The pontificate of Pontian was followed by that of Anteros, nominated during the lifetime of his predecessor, who had had to surrender his office when removed from Rome (235).<sup>2</sup> Anteros was very soon persecuted in his turn and condemned to death, even before Pontian had succumbed to the rigours of his imprisonment.<sup>3</sup>

*Pope Fabian*

His successor, Fabian, who, according to one account, was miraculously pointed out to the Christian electors by a dove which alighted on his head,<sup>4</sup> remained longer in charge—in fact until 250, when he died a martyr's death in the Decian persecution.<sup>5</sup> His pontificate was an eventful one in the history of the Church. We find no trace in his time of the schism of Hippolytus. Fabian was

<sup>1</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xxiii.

<sup>2</sup> According to the *Chronicle* of Hippolytus.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Liber Pontificalis*, ed. Duchesne, Vol. I, p. ci.

<sup>4</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xxix.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Bk. III, p. 794.



able to labour in peace in the organic development of the Christian community of Rome. According to the *Liberian Catalogue*, he was responsible for the institution of the seven deaconries, which were entrusted with the ecclesiastical administration of the city,<sup>6</sup> and also of the seven subdeacons destined to relieve the deacons of a part of a ministry which they could no longer fulfil themselves.<sup>7</sup> Two incidents which took place during his episcopate bring new proofs of the pre-eminent authority of the Roman See in the Church. The Bishop of Lambesa in Africa had professed doctrines which were regarded as opposed to the faith, and this led to his condemnation for heresy by an African council. His teaching evoked not only a severe letter from the Bishop of Carthage, but also one from Pope Fabian.<sup>8</sup> Origen, moreover, had been likewise accused of heterodoxy, and had been condemned by his bishop, Demetrius of Alexandria, though mainly because of the irregularity of his ordination to the priesthood, and this condemnation had been supported by a Roman synod assembled by Pontian. Origen thereupon addressed a doctrinal apology to Fabian to justify himself.<sup>9</sup>

### *Pope Cornelius. Difficulties in Rome*

The election of a successor to Fabian, to which the church of Rome proceeded after an interval of fourteen months due to the Decian persecution, was the occasion of a schism. The priest Cornelius received the majority of votes, but a minority of the faithful designated Novatian, another Roman priest, who was especially prominent because of his theological knowledge and his abilities, and who was at the same time also somewhat ambitious.<sup>10</sup> He was supported by a party which was small in number, but very head-strong. In this way a new schism broke out, which resulted in the first place from personal rivalry, but at once developed into a doctrinal conflict. Novatian, as we have seen,<sup>11</sup> refused pardon to those who had recently lapsed. Cornelius agreed to grant them pardon,

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 1109.

<sup>7</sup> *Liber Pontificalis*, ed. Duchesne, Vol. I, p. 149. According to this, the subdeacons had especially to assist the *notarii* or ecclesiastical notaries in drawing up the authentic acts of the martyrs.

<sup>8</sup> St. Cyprian, *Epist.*, lxi, 10.

<sup>9</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xxxvi, 4; St. Jerome, *Epist.*, lxxxiv.

<sup>10</sup> On Novatian, cf. A. d'Alès, *Novatien, Etude sur la théologie romaine au milieu du III<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris, 1925, and Bk. III, p. 852.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Bk. III, p. 853.

provided they did penance. We have already mentioned the increased spiritual severity which Novatian very soon practised, and the growth of a schism which set out to form a Church of the pure and holy, καθαροί. Cornelius had to fight a bitter battle, in which he was strongly supported by St. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, who was himself experiencing similar difficulties, though from a contrary reason, due to the upholders of excessive indulgence.<sup>12</sup> Their mutual support helped the two bishops to surmount their difficulties, although the Novatian schism could not be extinguished, and their good relations remained famous, in spite of a slight cloud. The Church has joined them together in a common feast.<sup>13</sup>

In spite of the opposition he had to encounter, or rather on the occasion of it, Cornelius was able to measure the moral power of the head of the Roman Church. He assembled at Rome in the autumn of 251 a synod comprising no less than some sixty bishops, not to mention priests and deacons, who excommunicated Novatian and his followers.<sup>14</sup> We gather that at that time the Roman community had forty-six priests and about forty other clerics. The Christians of Rome very soon had to face further troubles, for the persecution broke out once more under the Emperor Gallus and lasted a few months.<sup>15</sup> In the course of this Cornelius had to go into exile, and there he died.

### *The Papacy and the Ecclesiastical Ideas of St. Cyprian*

Although short and full of difficulties, the pontificate of Cornelius is an important one in the history of the Roman See, and its troubles serve to bring its prestige into prominence. An especially significant testimony is that of the well-known work written by Cyprian<sup>16</sup> in order to defend ecclesiastical unity threatened by schisms, the *De unitate Ecclesiae*. In this we find a respect for the Roman Church which is not surprising in the friend and ally of Cornelius, but which is of particular interest because it is written by a great bishop whose conception of church order is, in spite of this respect, more episcopalian than Roman, and who would later find himself in open

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Bk. III, pp. 849 *et seq.*

<sup>13</sup> On 16th September.

<sup>14</sup> St. Cyprian, *Epist.*, xiii; Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xliii.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Bk. III, p. 798.

<sup>16</sup> On the work of St. Cyprian, cf. A. d'Alès, *La théologie de saint Cyprien*, Paris, 1922, and Bk. III, pp. 842 *et seq.*

opposition to the second successor of Cornelius, Pope Stephen, on the subject of heretical baptism.

The *De unitate Ecclesiæ* certainly did not aim at showing that the unity of the Church is assured by the supremacy of the Roman See. What Cyprian set out to defend was the unity of each of the churches which together form the Church universal, a unity centred in a visible authority, that of the bishop. The problem of the union between the various churches, and of a higher authority which would guarantee it, is not his concern. His exegesis of the *Tu es Petrus* excludes any reasonable doubt on this subject. For him, in declaring that he will build his church on Peter, Christ wished to show, by this numerical unity, the moral unity which ought to reign in it. The *Tu es Petrus*, he says again in one of his letters,<sup>17</sup> is to be understood of the whole episcopate. The other apostles remained equal to Peter, *pari consortio præditi et honoris et potestatis*. In spite of this, in this same treatise *De unitate Ecclesiæ*, we read, not, it is true, in all the manuscripts,<sup>18</sup> a formal passage in favour of the Roman primacy: *Primatus Petro datur*, and further, *Qui cathedram Petri*—these two words certainly signify, and can only signify the See of Rome—*super quam fundata Ecclesia est, deserit, in Ecclesia se esse confidit?* "He who separates himself from the chair of Peter, upon which the Church is founded—can he think he is still in the Church?"

Is there not an antinomy between such words and the rest of the treatise? This has been maintained, and a very simple explanation has been advanced: the passage must have been interpolated by persons devoted to Rome. Hugo Koch, one of the most determined opponents of the historical foundation of the Roman primacy, and a most convinced defender of the thesis of the intransigent episcopalianism of St. Cyprian, upon which he seems now to be the recognised authority, has even gone further in his last work, *Cathedra Petri*,<sup>19</sup> and has maintained that the interpolation must have been made in the fifth century, round about the time of the Council of Chalcedon,<sup>20</sup> when preoccupations of the same kind added to the

<sup>17</sup> *Epist.*, xxvii.

<sup>18</sup> On the twofold recension of the *De unitate*, cf. Bk. III, pp. 855-857.

<sup>19</sup> Beiheft 11 of the *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, Giessen, 1930.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. *The Church in the Christian Roman Empire*.

sixth canon of Nicæa <sup>21</sup> a phrase which did not originally belong to it, *Ecclesia romana semper habuit primatum*.

Although this thesis of interpolation, which is that of Protestant writers unfavourable to the Papacy, such as Koch, <sup>22</sup> Benson <sup>23</sup> and Loofs, <sup>24</sup> has also been accepted by Catholic writers such as Ehrhard <sup>25</sup> and Tixeront, <sup>26</sup> recent writers are more inclined towards the less simple solution of a revision of text made by St. Cyprian himself, a solution favoured not only by Catholic writers such as Abbot Chapman <sup>27</sup> but also by non-Catholics like Otto Ritschl, <sup>28</sup> both of these writers making it plain that the contested version is written in St. Cyprian's own style. Why, then, the revision? Two explanations have been given which are equally credible: (a) the "Roman redaction" was the first, and Cyprian modified it to the extent of striking out the references to the *primatus* when he was in difficulties with Pope Stephen; <sup>29</sup> (b) Cyprian first wrote the *De unitate* expressly in order to combat the African schism, but he strengthened his original text when he sent his book to Rome to make it apply to the Roman schism. <sup>30</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Cf. *The Church in the Christian Roman Empire*.

<sup>22</sup> *Cyprian und der römische Primat, in Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur*, Vol. XXXV, Leipzig, 1910. Cf. by the same, *Cathedra Petri*, quoted p. 1132, n. 3 and p. 1127, n. 19.

<sup>23</sup> *Cyprian, his Life, his Time, his Work*, London, 1897, pp. 180 *et seq.*

<sup>24</sup> *Dogmengeschichte*, Halle a. S., 1906, p. 209.

<sup>25</sup> *Die altchristliche Literatur und ihre Erforschung von 1884 bis 1900*, Freiburg in Bresgau, 1900, p. 476.

<sup>26</sup> *Histoire des Dogmes*, 11th ed., Paris, 1930, pp. 381 *et seq.*

<sup>27</sup> *Les interpolations dans le traité de saint Cyprien sur l'unité de l'Eglise*, in *Revue Bénédictine*, Vol. XIX, 1902, pp. 246 *et seq.*; 357 *et seq.*, and Vol. XX, 1903, pp. 26 *et seq.*

<sup>28</sup> *Cyprian von Carthago und die Verfassung der Kirche*, Göttingen, 1885, pp. 92 *et seq.*

<sup>29</sup> This is the solution presented, with numerous texts quoted in its support, by P. D. Van der Eynde, *La double édition du De unitate de saint Cyprien*, in *Revue d'hist. ecclési.*, Vol. XXIX, 1933, pp. 1 *et seq.* He shows that the Scriptural quotations made by St. Cyprian on ecclesiastical matters are also different in the period of difficulties with Rome—an important point.

<sup>30</sup> This is the thesis of J. Lebreton, *La double édition du De unitate de saint Cyprien*, in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XXIV, 1934, pp. 456 *et seq.* He thinks that in this way we can better understand why Cyprian changed his text, since for doing so he had the positive motive of a clearly determined object, and one which moreover could not form the basis of any objection against him. On the other hand, would not a "retraction" in the course of a warm controversy have been noticed at once, discussed, and condemned by the opposite party? However, new comparisons of the texts, made by O. Perler, *Zur Datierung der*

For the rest, the *De unitate Ecclesiæ* is not the only written work of Cyprian in which his episcopalianism nevertheless bows before the supremacy of the Roman See. In his numerous letters, those addressed to Rome or dealing with Roman matters have a distinguishing note, and especially one of them, *Epistola lix*, in which we find the ever famous phrase already quoted<sup>31</sup> concerning the Roman Church, which is described as the *Ecclesia principalis* whence arises the unity of the priesthood. Hugo Koch has tried to give an interpretation of this in harmony with his own ideas,<sup>32</sup> making *Ecclesia principalis* the equivalent of *Ecclesia principis*, and explaining the expression *ad Petri cathedram atque ad Ecclesiam principalem, unde unitas sacerdotalis exorta est* as really tantamount to *ad Ecclesiam principis, a quo principe unitas sacerdotalis exorta est*. That is indeed an exegesis of despair, which could find its justification only in the impossibility of harmonising a profession of Roman faith with the ecclesiastical theory of St. Cyprian. But this supposed incompatibility might well be nothing but an arbitrary notion held by a certain type of mind.

St. Cyprian was unquestionably an episcopalian, preoccupied mainly with the interior unity of each church, which its shepherds should defend from heresy, schism and dissensions, and accordingly emphasised above all the office of the bishop. But in certain circumstances he felt it necessary to say in addition that among these churches there is one which is the first and, as it were, the symbol of the unity of all the others, because in tracing back the series of its bishops, we arrive with certainty not merely at a particular and well-known apostle, but indeed at the one in whose person unity had precisely rested. If this Church has in this way a special position, is there not an obligation, not denied, though of course not formulated by St. Cyprian, on the part of the sum total of churches constituting the universal Church, to be in conformity with her ("convenire"<sup>33</sup> in the words of St. Irenæus) in matters of faith, though such obligation does not imply in Rome a supreme right to command, a right which Cyprian rejects in matters of discipline? Such is, in any case, the conclusion reached by historians like Har-

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beiden Fassungen des Vierten Kapitels *De Unitate Ecclesiæ* (*Römische Quartalschrift*, XLIV, 1936, pp. 1-44), have strengthened the thesis of the priority of the "Roman" redaction.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Bk. III, p. 869, n. 81.

<sup>32</sup> *Cathedra Petri*, pp. 91 et seq.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Bk. II, p. 491.

nack,<sup>34</sup> Funk<sup>35</sup> and Batiffol<sup>36</sup> who, declining to follow the thesis of the strictly episcopalian interpretation adopted by Koch, Benson and Loofs, Tixeront and Ehrhard, regard Cyprian as, perhaps, less Roman than Chapman and Ritschl think, yet who agree that Cyprian recognised in the Church of Rome, in default of a primacy of jurisdiction, at least the authority of a real and living centre of unity, that is, essentially, of a unity of faith in relation to the universal Church.<sup>37</sup>

### *Rome and Carthage*

Such recognition did not prevent divergent attitudes, which were sometimes serious.

In the time of Cornelius himself there were the minor difficulties already mentioned: the incident of Hadrumetum, in which Cornelius may have felt that the Church of Africa entertained some doubt as to his legitimacy,<sup>38</sup> and the contrary suspicions which Cornelius's examination of the complaints of the African schismatics against Cyprian may have aroused in the latter.<sup>39</sup>

### *The Spanish Conflict*

Nothing further happened. Cornelius died shortly afterwards. He had as successor Lucius, whose very short pontificate was partly spent in exile; after his death the Roman Church chose for its head the priest Stephen (254-257).<sup>40</sup> It was during the pontificate of

<sup>34</sup> *Dogmengeschichte*, Vol. I, 4th edn., Leipzig, 1909, pp. 417 *et seq.*

<sup>35</sup> *Theologische Revue*, Vol. VIII, 1909, p. 422.

<sup>36</sup> *L'Eglise naissante et le catholicisme*, Paris, 1909, 12th edn., 1927, pp. 399 *et seq.*

<sup>37</sup> We find some echo of these ideas in a recent study on the ecclesiastical theory of Cyprian by B. Poschmann, *Ecclesia principalis, Ein kritiker Beitrag zur Frage des Primats bei Cyprian*, Breslau, 1933. According to this, the original Church (*Urkirche*) and Peter are very closely associated in Cyprian's thought. Rome continues this original Church, and is indeed in this way the *Ecclesia principalis*. But this does not give it more than a special dignity, which in turn involves a duty of interposing more than other churches in order to safeguard the unity of the Church. The idea of an effective jurisdiction of Rome over the Church, undeniably foreign to Cyprian, would be the fruit of a later development, which would appear legitimate to those who believe that Christ really gave the primacy to Peter. Cf. also Bk. III, pp. 866 *et seq.*

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Bk. III, p. 853, n. 29.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Bk. III, p. 857, n. 40.

<sup>40</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VII, ii.

Stephen that another matter arose which led to a most serious opposition of ideas between Rome and Carthage. Two Spanish bishops whom we have already mentioned, Basilides of Legio (Leon) and Asturica (Astorga), and Martial of Merita (Merida) had procured certificates of sacrifice during the Decian persecution. Their clergy, who wished to have only bishops worthy of the name, would not have anything more to do with them, and called for their deposition, in conformity with the decisions of the African Council, confirmed by Cornelius and Cyprian. This Council, while pronouncing in favour of general measures of mercy in respect of the *lapsi*, had nevertheless deprived apostate clerics of the exercise of the priesthood. The Spanish episcopate agreed with the clergy, and the two *libellatici* were deposed, and replaced by two new bishops, Sabinus and Felix. The condemned bishops thereupon appealed to Rome—a fact which seems to show that such an appeal was regarded as a normal course. Did Pope Stephen, who seems to have been somewhat autocratic like Victor, think the occasion a fitting one to show that the African Council was not the supreme law of the Church? Or did the condemned bishops really succeed in persuading him that they were in fact not guilty? What is certain is that the Pope exonerated them and pronounced them to be re-established in their sees. The Spaniards did not accept defeat, but in 254 notified the African Council of the matter,<sup>41</sup> and also St. Cyprian, who at that time acted as the spiritual director of a notable part of the Church. The Council confirmed the deposition of the two bishops. This was logical on its part, inasmuch as it held that a sentence pronounced by the Spanish episcopate was certainly valid, but illogical in the sense that it nevertheless considered that it had a right to confirm this sentence.

### *The Papacy, St. Cyprian and the Gallic Church*

It is also possible that Stephen may have received further information which convinced him of the unworthiness of the deposed bishops, for not only do we not find him continuing to lend the weight of his authority to their cause, which indeed seems to have admitted of little in the way of defence, but also, when new circumstances arose shortly afterwards, there is nothing to show any serious change in the relations between him and St. Cyprian arising out

<sup>41</sup> St. Cyprian, *Epist.*, lxxvii.

of the Spanish affair. This was, moreover, succeeded by a French incident, in connection with which, in a way rather unexpected after the Spanish precedent, Cyprian addressed to Rome a request for intervention implying his recognition of Rome's pre-eminent authority. The Bishop of Arles, Marcianus, an upholder of Novatian rigorism, did not accept the decisions taken in concert by Rome and Carthage in 251 and also adopted *de facto* by the churches as a whole in the matter of the reconciliation of the *lapsi*. The Bishop of Lyons, acting in the name of his fellow bishops of the same province, "cæteris episcopis nostris in eadem provincia constitutis,"<sup>42</sup> denounced Marcianus as a schismatic, both to Rome and to Carthage.<sup>43</sup> As a result, St. Cyprian did not hesitate to write himself to Pope Stephen, asking him to have Marcianus deposed by the Gallic bishops and to see that a successor was appointed in his place.<sup>44</sup> This was tantamount to recognising that it belonged to Stephen to declare the Bishop of Arles unworthy of retaining his episcopal functions, and a phrase at the end of Cyprian's letter, in which he asks Stephen to inform him of the name of the new bishop so that the Africans may know with whom they ought to communicate, certainly seems to show that he alone is a legitimate bishop with whom Rome, the *Ecclesia principalis* of *Epist. lix*, declares himself in communion.

### *The Baptismal Controversy*

In spite of this, we find that perhaps less than a year after these vicissitudes, a new difficulty arose which proved to be more serious than the preceding ones, and which brought about a real conflict between the Pope and not only the Bishop of Carthage together with the African episcopate, but also several of the most prominent churches of Asia. The baptismal controversy has already been dis-

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Bk. III, p. 777, where this text has been quoted in support of the thesis that, from the middle of the third century, the Bishop of Lyons already had Gallic colleagues other than those of the Narbonne.

<sup>43</sup> St. Cyprian, *Epist.*, lxxviii.

<sup>44</sup> It does not follow from this text that the Pope was himself to make this nomination, for the circumstances merely rendered it necessary for him to see that it took place. Nevertheless, there were already instances at that time of bishops nominated by the Pope, though it certainly seems that this was restricted to choosing the bishops forming what the texts call his "council," i.e. those of the surrounding parts of Italy, i.e. peninsular Italy, or perhaps a less extensive territory, which would more or less correspond to the civil sphere of the prefect of Rome. Cf. Bk. III, p. 860, n. 48.



cussed above<sup>45</sup> in suitable detail. It brought out the opposition between two customs hitherto in usage in the Church in different regions. The majority of churches, including Rome, did not practise the rebaptism of converted heretics, but conferred upon them only the imposition of hands and chrism. Asia Minor, Syria and Africa—but not Palestine or Egypt, for these were generally in agreement with each other and tended to act in the Roman way during the first Christian centuries—re-baptised heretics. Even so, in Africa itself there were disagreements on the point, and this led to a new and more solemn affirmation in Council of the discipline followed generally in this province, or rather group of provinces.<sup>46</sup> Cyprian notified Rome of this decision, in a letter which implicitly condemned the other discipline. It is not surprising that his delegates were ill received on this occasion, and Stephen's reply was one of exceptional gravity. Not only did he not accept the lesson which they had tried to give him but, just as his predecessor Victor had decided, three quarters of a century previously, to impose upon the whole Church the Roman way of fixing the date of Easter, so he in turn declared that the Roman usage in the reception of heretics was the only lawful one, and that all churches ought to conform themselves to it, failing which he would break communion with those who would not do so. We know that thereupon there was resistance—passive indeed but very definite—on the part of the two groups of nonconforming provinces, Asia with Syria, grouped behind Bishop Firmilian of Cæsarea, and Africa headed by Cyprian of Carthage.

Stephen's thesis was this: in so important a matter as the discipline of the sacraments, the practice should be the same throughout the Church, and should be that of Rome. Cyprian's thesis on the other hand was this: unity of faith is compatible with a diversity of usages. The Africans did not thereby deny the obligation of being in agreement in matters concerning the faith with the *Ecclesia principalis*, but they did not regard themselves as bound to follow her in a domain in which the various churches could, in their view, have their own ways of acting. Moreover, they did not consider that they were in any way breaking with Rome: if Rome refused them her communion, they for their part did not wish to separate from her, and they would continue to send messages to her, and to re-

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Bk. III, pp. 860 *et seq.*

<sup>46</sup> Proconsular Africa, Numidia and Mauretania.

ceive any representatives from her if any should come. It was indeed a paradoxical situation, and we do not know what would have been its consequences if it had been prolonged. But it was providentially terminated by the death of Stephen in August 257.

### *Sixtus II*

The election of a more conciliatory successor, Sixtus II, brought about a lessening of the tension all the sooner in that the initiative of Stephen, as previously that of Victor, had not been unaccompanied by regrets even amongst those who themselves adhered to the Roman usage. "Dionysius of Alexandria, the Irenæus of this new Victor,"<sup>47</sup> had informed him that the excommunication of the Asiatics and the Africans was, in his opinion, a measure of severity disproportionate to its motive. Sixtus II saw in this language a counsel of moderation. Relations were reopened between him and St. Cyprian,<sup>48</sup> and also with Firmilian. Very soon afterwards, his successor, Pope Dionysius, was sending, together with words of peace, the assistance of Roman charity to the Church of Cappadocia, devastated by the Persian invasion (259).<sup>49</sup>

## § 3. THE PAPACY IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE THIRD CENTURY

The reign of Sixtus II was a very short one. On 6th August 258 he was arrested in the cemetery of Prætextatus while celebrating the Eucharist contrary to the edicts of Valerian; he was immediately beheaded, after eleven months and six days of his pontificate.<sup>1</sup> The new bishop was not chosen from among the deacons, as had long been the custom in Rome. Doubtless that was because the deacons had all perished. Hence, as in the election of Cornelius, a priest was chosen. This took place at the end of the Decian persecution. The priest's name was Dionysius, and he was duly raised to the episcopate.

<sup>47</sup> L. Duchesne, *Histoire ancienne de l'Eglise*, Vol. I. p. 429.

<sup>48</sup> Pontius, *Vita Cypriani*, xiv.

<sup>49</sup> St. Basil, *Epist.*, lxx.

<sup>1</sup> *Liber Pontificalis*, ed. Duchesne, Vol. I, pp. 7, 68, and 155, and St. Cyprian, *Epist.*, lxxx.

*Pope Dionysius*

His reign marks a new date in the history of the Roman Church, and provides one more incident testifying to the directive authority which it claimed and which was recognised by the other churches in matters of faith. Here we have a Roman intervention in the life of another Christian community, reminding us, by its manner and success, of that of Pope Clement at Corinth, but motived this time by a reason of a doctrinal character. The intervention is all the more significant in that the church to which Rome thus addresses a warning is the one which appears, in traditions echoed by the sixth canon of the Council of Nicæa <sup>2</sup> and by subsequent history, as the first in dignity among those of the East, the Church of Alexandria.

*The "Two Dionysii"*

The incident itself has been related above. The Bishop of Alexandria, Dionysius, in order to combat the excesses of the Sabellian or Modalist doctrines, according to which the distinction between the Persons of the Trinity is only a verbal one, set forth in a letter an exposition in the contrary sense, i.e. in the Origenist sense of the doctrine of the Word, stressing the distinction between the Persons to the point of seeming to end in Tritheism, and plainly subordinating the Son to the Father. This letter aroused much feeling: those whom it envisaged turned spontaneously to the Bishop of Rome, as to the highest and safest doctrinal authority, complaining of the errors in the letter. Pope Dionysius did not hesitate to take up the matter; he caused it to be examined by his council, that is, by the bishops of his immediate neighbourhood, peninsular Italy or at least the suburbican region, and he ended by sending a letter written in his own name and that of his council, condemning both Modalism and, without naming Dionysius of Alexandria himself, all those who held three separate hypostases, and made the Word a creature. The Egyptian bishop replied by presenting arguments to justify himself, but he did not in any way protest either against the Roman teaching or against the right which the Bishop of Rome claimed to give it.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 1120, and *The Church in the Christian Roman Empire*.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *supra*, pp. 1027 *et seq.*

On this occasion, the Bishop of Rome spoke truly as a judge of the faith, whose doctrinal sentence is valid for the whole Church, and his decision was accepted, without any discussion as to his competence to give it, by the occupant of the episcopal see which at that period had the greatest prestige in the whole East. The letter of Dionysius gave in addition an opportunity to the church of Rome to condemn at one and the same time the Sabellian errors and the opposite exaggerations, and to dissociate itself still more clearly than it had done under Callistus from interpretations of the schools, condemning their necessarily fragmentary and one-sided character, in order to adhere to the common teaching which, indifferent to the systems of the schools, sacrificed none of the elements of Tradition concerning the divine unity and the Trinity of Persons, and did not make them the subject of speculation.

### *Pope Felix*

Dionysius of Rome died on 26th December 268.<sup>4</sup> The Christian community of Rome elected as his successor Felix, who governed the Church until 275. Continuing the work of Dionysius, he is said to have written to Maximus, Bishop of Alexandria, a letter on the divinity and perfect humanity of Christ, inserted later on in great part in the Acts of the Council of Ephesus (431).<sup>5</sup> But it has been proved that this supposed letter was an Apollinarian forgery.<sup>6</sup> Even so, the importance of the Roman See in the Universal Church was proclaimed during the pontificate of Felix by the imperial authority itself, in significant circumstances: the Bishop of Antioch, Paul of Samosata, on account of his anti-Trinitarian and Adoptionist heresies, destructive of the divinity of Christ, had been deposed by a Council assembled in his episcopal city in 268; he tried to remain at the head of his diocese, and refused to give up the places of worship to the new bishop, Demetrianus. The Emperor Aurelian, who was passing through Antioch at the beginning of 272, was

<sup>4</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxx; *Liber Pontificalis*, ed. Duchesne, Vol. I, p. 261. On this date, which seems certain, instead of 269 as sometimes given, cf. Aube, *Hist. des persécutions*, Vol. IV, p. 460, and Allard, *Hist. des persécutions*, Vol. III, pp. 207 and 210-211.

<sup>5</sup> See *The Church in the Christian Roman Empire*.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Bardenheuer, *Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur*, Vol. II, 2nd edn., p. 645. On Apollinarianism see *The Church in the Christian Roman Empire*.

called in to settle this question of the right of property, and he declared that the true bishop and legitimate possessor of the episcopal house was the one recognised by the bishops of Rome and Italy.<sup>7</sup> The fact that Rome was the capital city naturally explains this decision in part, but equally it corresponds to a no less real state of things in the ecclesiastical order: the Emperor was not unaware of what the Roman bishop was in the eyes of the whole Church.

### *Eutychianus and Gaius*

Of the two immediate successors of Felix, Eutychianus and Gaius, we know scarcely more than their names. Their episcopates were times of peace and tranquillity, during which the history of the Church was uneventful. The very dates of their respective reigns are altogether uncertain. The *Liber Pontificalis* assigns to Eutychianus a reign of eight years and eleven months, and to Gaius thirteen years, while according to Eusebius Eutychianus reigned only ten months and Gaius fifteen years.<sup>8</sup> We can only confess our ignorance as to the chronology of these two pontificates. Similarly, the supposed relationship between Gaius and Diocletian, inferred from a martyrological *Passion*, that of St. Suzanna, must be relegated to the realm of legend, for the *Acta Suzannæ* are devoid of any historical value.<sup>9</sup>

### *Pope Marcellinus*

The successor to Gaius, Marcellinus, nominated in 296 if we accept the chronology of the *Liber Pontificalis*, or as early as 291 if we follow that of Eusebius, was destined to see the return of bloody days, those of the last and great persecution under Diocletian, the repercussions of which brought about a sharp crisis in the Church of Rome, though a purely local one. This we shall deal with later.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxx. Cf. G. Bardy, *Paul de Samosate, Etude historique* (*Spicilegium sacrum Lovaniense*, fasc. 4), Paris and Louvain, 1923, pp. 284 *et seq.* New edition, 1929, pp. 358 *et seq.*

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxxii, 1, and *Liber Pontificalis*, ed. Duchesne. Vol. I, pp. cclxi and 159-161.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. L. Duchesne, *Les légendes de l'Alta Semita et le tombeau de saint Cyriaque sur la voie d'Ostie*, in *Mélanges d'Archéologie et d'Histoire*, published by the French School in Rome, Vol. XXXVI, 1916, pp. 27 *et seq.* (the *Passion* of St. Suzanna is studied in pp. 33 *et seq.*).

<sup>10</sup> Cf. *infra*, pp. 1196-1197 and pp. 1203-1204.

#### § 4. THE PRE-EMINENT AUTHORITY OF THE ROMAN SEE

##### *Characteristics of Roman Authority*

With the pontificate of Marcellinus, we conclude a history of about a century and a half, during which the Roman bishop, successor of St. Peter and ruler of the church of the capital city of the Empire, was, by that very fact, in face of the imperial power which was at times hostile and at others tolerant or even benevolent, the first representative of the Christian Church. Upon him fell the first blows when persecution broke out; but sometimes also, as under Aurelian, he was the subject of attentions the significance of which cannot be doubted. During the same period, a series of facts of various kinds but always significant, bore witness to the special but otherwise undefined authority, which was his in the eyes of the Church as a whole.

Visits to Rome on the part of the most prominent men of the Christian world, Irenæus, Tertullian, Origen, as well as by heterodox people like Marcion, Theodotus or Sabellius, who could not be indifferent to the views of Rome; numerous letters of the Roman Church to other churches on points of doctrine or of discipline, such as those of Victor, Pontian, Fabian, Cornelius, Stephen, Sixtus, Dionysius, and Felix—all these things bear witness to the prestige of Rome, as also to the solicitude of Rome for the Universal Church. It must be carefully noted that this prestige was independent of the individual merits of those whose office, not whose person, benefited thereby: was not Callistus preferred to Hippolytus, and Cornelius to Novatian? The authority of the Bishop of Rome was not derived from his personal merits, as was the case for a Cyprian, and would be later on for an Ambrose or an Augustine, but from the tradition he represented. Add to all this some other no less significant facts already mentioned elsewhere: <sup>1</sup> the influence of Rome in the definition of the rule of faith enshrined in the baptismal Creed, and in the formation of the Canon of the Scriptures; the continuity of an episcopal succession going back without a break to the apostles, and indeed to the apostles Peter and Paul, thus making the Roman

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vol. III, pp. 698 *et seq.*

Church the Apostolic Church *par excellence*; <sup>2</sup> and we have a right to say in conclusion that the distinctive features of the Catholic constitution of the Church were set forth in Rome with a continuity, a definiteness and an absence of hesitation in which we discern at once the manifestation and an explanation of its universal authority.

### *The Roman See and Local Churches*

We must repeat that this authority was, in these early days, one which was experienced rather than conceived, or, as Mgr. Duchesne has said, "felt rather than defined: felt in the first place by the Romans themselves, who, from the time of St. Clement, never doubted as to their duties towards Christianity as a whole; felt also by the others, in so far as this impression was not counteracted by some particular pre-occupation."<sup>3</sup> Doubtless, when some local tradition, liturgical or ritual in character, such as that of the Asiatics in the matter of the date of Easter in the time of Pope Victor, or that of a number of Easterns and Africans on the subject of the baptism of heretics in the time of Pope Stephen, was found to be in opposition with the discipline which Rome wanted to make general, the prerogatives of the See of Peter were the subject of questioning as regards their application. "But in the ordinary course of things, the great Christian community of the metropolis of the world, founded at the very beginning of the Church, and consecrated by the sojourn and the martyrdom of the apostles Peter and Paul, retained its old position as the common centre of Christendom and, if we may so express it, the headquarters of the Gospel. The pious curiosity of the faithful and of the pastors was constantly directed towards her. Everywhere people wanted to know what was being done there, and what was taught there; if necessary, visits were paid there. The originators of religious movements sought to be accepted there, and even to clothe themselves with its universal authority by finding a place among its leaders. Its charity, derived from an already considerable fortune, reached the most distant provinces like

<sup>2</sup> Note especially the tremendous importance which Irenæus (cf. *Adversus hæreses*, I, xxvii; III, iii) attributes to the Roman episcopal list as a guarantee of the Apostolic succession. Shortly after his time, the unknown author of a treatise (*Against the heresy of Artemon*), written in the time of Pope Zephyrinus, says in a passage conserved by Eusebius (*Hist. eccles.*, V, xxii, 3), that "the truth of preaching has been kept down to the time of Victor, the thirteenth Bishop of Rome after Peter."

<sup>3</sup> *Histoire ancienne de l'Eglise*, Vol. I, pp. 536-537.

Cappadocia and Arabia in times of persecution or of disasters. Its eyes were upon the doctrinal controversies which disturbed other countries.”<sup>4</sup> Adopting as though by instinct both moderation and wisdom in its practice, following with sure steps the *via media* which kept it away from the rocks which threatened the various theologies of the schools, acting as the guardian of a purely religious deposit which it did not consider itself called upon to transcribe into the language of a particular philosophy, but holding itself ready when it was necessary, to show the danger or error in any particular interpretation, “it did not hesitate to ask from Origen an explanation of the eccentricities of his exegesis, and to recall the great primate of Egypt to orthodoxy. Its position was so evident that even pagans were fully aware of it. Confronted with two claimants to the see of Antioch, the emperor Aurelian saw at once who was the rightful bishop, namely, the one in communion with the Bishop of Rome.”<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Duchesne, *ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 537.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 537-538.



# ECCLESIASTICAL PROPERTY, AND THE JURIDICAL SITUATION OF THE CHURCH IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE DURING THE THIRD CENTURY<sup>1</sup>

THE quarrel which was settled by the decision of Aurelian, and this decision itself, are important not only as regards the position held in the universal Church by the Roman bishop. They are also of the greatest interest from two other points of view. They testify both to the existence of corporative ecclesiastical property, and of relations which were, so to speak, official, well before the end of the era of persecutions, between the Church and the Roman Empire.

## § I. ECCLESIASTICAL PROPERTY

### *The Manner of Possession of Church Goods during the Second Century*

The material goods necessary for the existence of a religious community, ecclesiastical lands, churches and cemeteries, were in the early days of the history of the Church held in the names of individual owners.<sup>2</sup> But this state of things was not altogether satisfactory. "A change of mind on the part of the owner or his heirs, his apostasy, or transfer to a heretical sect, would endanger the use by the Church. In the case of a burial place, the use itself could not be altered, but, for instance, an owner not well disposed towards the Church could introduce into a Christian burying ground dead heretics or pagans belonging to his family."<sup>3</sup> Another kind of possession was therefore desirable."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bibliography.—The essential works to be consulted are indicated in the notes to this chapter. Add to these: J. P. Waltzing, *Collegia*, article in *Dict. d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, Vol. III, 2nd Part, cols. 2107 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Bk. II, pp. 520 *et seq.*

<sup>3</sup> It was impossible to exclude such by a disposition such as that envisaged by the formula "ad religionem pertinentes meam" employed by a deceased person to designate those members of his family to be put in his tomb. Christianity, being a *religio illicita*, could not invoke the protection of the laws. Cf. De Rossi, in *Bullettino di archeologia cristiana*, Vol. III, 1865, pp. 54, 92.

<sup>4</sup> Duchesne, *Histoire ancienne de l'Eglise*, Vol. I, p. 382.

### *Constitution of Ecclesiastical Property*

This was introduced, at least at Rome, even before the end of the second century. The pontificate of Pope Victor (189-199), which is important from so many points of view,<sup>5</sup> may well have witnessed this important transformation in the social life of the Church, which was all the more understandable at this period because, following the precarious but real peace granted to Christians by the Emperor Commodus in the pontificate of Eleutherius (175-189), Victor's predecessor, the Church was able to profit by a certain benevolence or tolerance on the part of the civil authority. In any case, when Victor's successor, Pope Zephyrinus (199-217), appointed his deacon Callistus, destined to become Pope in his turn, to the administration of "the cemetery,"<sup>6</sup> there is hardly room for doubt that this had to do with a corporative possession of the Roman church, acquired some time previously. The same certainly applies to the *area sepulturarum* in Carthage, which, at a not very much later time, was, according to Tertullian,<sup>7</sup> known to belong to the Christians.

### *Its Development in the Third Century*

Evidences multiply from that time onwards. Thus, under Alexander Severus, we have the dispute between the tavern-keepers, *popinari*, and the body of Christians in Rome, over the possession of a piece of land which had previously formed part of public ground, a dispute which was settled by the decision of the Emperor in favour of the Church.<sup>8</sup> After the Valerian persecution (260),<sup>9</sup> we find Bishop Dionysius of Alexandria and several of his colleagues summoned by the imperial fiscal officers to receive back religious places which had been sequestered. In 272, the possession of the episcopal dwelling of Antioch was disputed by Catholics and heretics who were followers of Paul of Samosata, and Aurelian decided in favour of the former. At the beginning of the fourth century, when the last persecution was coming to an end, the edicts of the emperor Galerius, and of Maxentius for Italy and Africa, restored in turn to Christians of various parts of the Empire the

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *supra*, pp. 1122-1123.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 1125.

<sup>7</sup> *Ad Scapulam*, iii.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Bk. III, p. 759.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Bk. III, p. 806.

corporative possessions confiscated in the Diocletian persecution.<sup>10</sup> Finally, the measures taken subsequently at Milan by Constantine and Licinius equally and formally concerned ecclesiastical property,<sup>11</sup> which could even be claimed back by the churches from third parties holding it.

## § 2. THE ORIGINS OF ECCLESIASTICAL PROPERTY, AND THE CONDITIONS OF EXISTENCE OF THE CHURCH IN THE EMPIRE

### *De Rossi's Theory on the "Collegia Tenuiorum"*

Seeing that Christianity was officially proscribed, how was it possible that corporative property on the part of the Church could not only originate but also be recognised by the State?

Giovanni Battista de Rossi thought the explanation of this could be found<sup>1</sup> in a peculiarity in the legislation concerning associations. Though the Empire regarded these with little favour, there had nevertheless been an exception, at least since Septimius Severus, in favour of the burial colleges of humble people, *collegia tenuiorum*, the members of which joined together to procure a suitable burial place. For this end the association could receive contributions, possess land, and hold meetings of a religious character. Christians have always cared greatly for the burial place in which are to be laid bodies destined for a glorious resurrection, and in their religious life cemeteries have occupied a prominent place: may we not conclude that they profited by the benevolent legislation concerning burial colleges, presenting their associations in this guise, which had so much to justify it? De Rossi thought they must have done so, and this opinion, which provided a solution for a difficult problem, received such support that it seemed to be the only one possible.

### *Critique of De Rossi's Theory*

Although it is still advanced by more than one writer to-day, it is not now regarded with so much favour, and such strong criticisms

<sup>10</sup> Cf. *infra*, pp. 1207 et seq.

<sup>11</sup> " . . . ad jus corporis eorum, idest ecclesiarum, non hominum singularium pertinentia" (Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutorum*, xlviij). Cf. *The Church in the Christian Roman Empire*, Vol. I.

<sup>1</sup> *Roma sotterranea*, Vol. I, p. 101; Vol. II, p. viii; *Bullettino di archeologia cristiana*, Vol. II, 1864, p. 57; Vol. III, 1865, p. 90.

have been made of it, particularly by Mgr. Duchesne,<sup>2</sup> that, in spite of the authority of De Rossi, it would be singularly difficult to keep to it to-day. For how can we allow that Christians were prepared to pass as members of burial colleges, seeing that these pagan institutions were regarded by them with horror, as Tertullian bears witness?<sup>3</sup> That writer certainly introduces into his *Apologeticum* a comparison between the two kinds of association, but this was in order strongly to emphasise the contrast between them. Moreover, in order that Christian associations could shelter behind the law officially protecting burial colleges, they would in the first place have had to comply with this law, which implied on the part of the colleges an obligation not to conceal an illicit association. But that was precisely what Christian associations were in the eyes of the authorities, for, since the *Institutum Neronianum*,<sup>4</sup> the existence of Christianity was legally prohibited. "It would thus have been necessary that the police should have been ignorant of the fact that a Christian church was referred to. That would have been particularly difficult. The burial colleges were associations of only a few people, two or three dozen perhaps. A church in a big city such as Rome, Carthage, or Alexandria, might easily comprise from thirty to forty thousand faithful in the middle of the third century. It would have been difficult to present such a great multitude of people as burial colleges."<sup>5</sup>

The suggestion must therefore be abandoned. The explanation of the position of Christian communities from the end of the second century, enjoying lengthy periods of peace between violent attacks, and managing to possess lands, places of worship and cemeteries as corporative properties, is to be found in the fact that during these periods they profited by a *de facto* toleration, or we might even say, at times, by a tacit recognition. In fine, the Church, as we have already shown,<sup>6</sup> did not conceal itself systematically except in periods of bitter hostility, when it had to go below ground to celebrate its religious mysteries, and when many Christians individually, and sometimes even the heads of communities, withdrew themselves by flight and took refuge in suitable hiding places from the searches by the police.

<sup>2</sup> *Histoire ancienne de l'Eglise*, Vol. I, pp. 384-387.

<sup>3</sup> *Apologeticum*, xxxix.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Bk. II, pp. 374 *et seq.*

<sup>5</sup> Duchesne, *op. cit.*, p. 385.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Bk. II, pp. 504-505, 519.

*The Church in the Eyes of the Roman Empire*

The state of the churches from the truce of Commodus to the Peace of Constantine, or rather until the edict of Galerius, was substantially, as a very acute jurist has recently established,<sup>7</sup> that of *de facto* associations of which the authorities were not unaware, which they were coming to understand more and more, and which, though they disapproved, they tended more and more to tolerate,<sup>8</sup> while at the same time they were ready, at the end of peaceful periods of ever increasing length, to return to attempts at repression and suppression by means of severities which were the more extreme and prolonged, in that the progress made by Christianity during the periods of tranquillity which had preceded caused greater anxiety on the part of the civil authorities. These attempts at repression, however, resulted only in a series of temporary checks. As Renan wrote: <sup>9</sup> "The Roman Empire had linked up its destiny with the law concerning *cœtus illiciti*, the *illicita collegia*. Christians and barbarians, accomplishing the task of the human conscience, destroyed the law; the Empire which had attached itself to it collapsed with it."

Hence the relations between Christianity and the civil authority had on both sides an open character very different from that involved in the conception of the Church concealed beneath appearances which would have made it a secret society. "Tertullian," says Mgr. Duchesne again,<sup>10</sup> "announces very plainly that the Christian society is a religious association: *Corpus sumus de conscientia religionis*." <sup>11</sup> Indeed, it was not necessary for him to say that: everybody knew it. To the pagans of his day, the notion of "Christian" was inseparable from that of a member of a religious society. The

<sup>7</sup> R. Saleilles, *L'organisation juridique des premières communautés chrétiennes*, in *Mélanges P. F. Girard*, Paris, 1912, Vol. II, pp. 469 *et seq.*

<sup>8</sup> M. Besnier, in a recent study on this subject (*Eglises chrétiennes et collèges funéraires*, in *Mélanges Dufourcq*, Paris, 1932, pp. 9 *et seq.*) rightly points out that the *Gnomon of the Idiologus*, that is the judicial ruling applied by the imperial procurator of Egypt, furnishes a proof that often only nominal penalties were inflicted on members of unauthorised associations. Cf. on the *Gnomon of the Idiologus*, Schupart, in *Berliner Griechischen Urkunden*, Vol. VI, 1, Berlin, 1910, and J. Carcopino, *Le Gnomon de l'Idiologue et son importance historique*, in *Revue des Études anciennes*, Vol. XXIX, 1922, pp. 211 *et seq.* M. Besnier likewise comes to the conclusion that De Rossi's theory must be abandoned.

<sup>9</sup> *Les Apôtres*, p. 364.

<sup>10</sup> *Histoire ancienne de l'Eglise*, Vol. I, pp. 386-387.

<sup>11</sup> *Apologeticum*, xxxix, 1.

assemblies for worship, the religious bonds which united all the faithful, were the first things to be perceived and calumniated. Hence, to tolerate Christians meant to tolerate the body of Christians; to persecute Christians meant to persecute the collective body they necessarily formed. This collective entity, which never ceased to grow and to become stronger, might appear dangerous to the security of the Empire: then the authorities would seek to exterminate it. But it might also appear inoffensive. Commodus, the Syrian emperors, Gallienus, and even Valerian, Aurelian and Diocletian, at the beginning of their reigns, did not regard Christianity as a danger. Lastly, one might recoil before the extermination of so many people, and before the dissolution of a society which so many severe measures had failed to check. A few emperors went further still. When Gallienus wrote to the bishops in order to give them back their churches, when Aurelian made Paul of Samosata surrender the church of Antioch, the Christians were doubtless very much tempted to regard themselves as authorised, both as individuals and as a corporation.

"Thus, the emperors of the third century all adopted a very definite attitude towards the Church: they either persecuted it openly, or else they tolerated it. In no case did they ignore it. Its meeting places, its cemeteries, and the names and domiciles of its leaders were known to the civil magistrates and the administrative authorities. If an edict of persecution should be issued, they knew where to find the bishop, they had him arrested, and took possession of the places of worship and of the goods of the Church. When the edict was revoked, it was once more the bishop who was sought out in order to receive the restored possessions. Of legal fictions, burial colleges, and mysterious titles, the documents give no testimony or even hint. All negotiations were between the government and the Christian body. Christianity had not ceased to be prohibited in theory; no imperial rescript had recognised it as a *religio licita*, or declared that Christian communities were authorised associations. The legal barriers were always in existence. But it became more and more impossible to take them seriously. The Vine of the Lord extended beyond them on all sides by its prolific growth."<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Duchesne, *Histoire ancienne de l'Eglise*, Vol. I, p. 387.

## CHRISTIAN LIFE IN THE THIRD CENTURY<sup>1</sup>

THE varying situation of the Church from Septimius Severus to Diocletian explains the divergent if not opposed characters of Christian life in the Roman Empire from the end of the second to the beginning of the fourth century.

### I. CHRISTIANS IN THE WORLD

#### § I. CHRISTIANS AND CIVIC LIFE

#### *Christians and the Common Life*

At that time, as previously, a Christian was a man called upon by the requirements of a higher morality to lead a life which would distinguish him from his fellow citizens without making it necessary for him to withdraw from the city. The law might strike him at any time, as the sovereign power had enacted; yet he was not thereby in the situation of a criminal whose life depended only on the ignorance of the authorities or his fellow citizens as to his real personality. Doubtless a certain mystery surrounded Christians because their religious activity was reserved to the intimacy of their relations with God, but this atmosphere of mystery gradually diminished with the

<sup>1</sup> Bibliography.—As for ch. xiii in Bk. II, adding the works mentioned in the notes to the present chapter.

Consult also: On the question of military service: A. Harnack, *Militia Christi, Die Religion und der Soldatenstand in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten*, Tübingen, 1905; E. Vacandard, *La question du service militaire chez les chrétiens des premiers siècles*, ch. iii in *Etudes de critique et d'histoire religieuse*, 2nd series, Paris, 1910, pp. 127-168. On Christian morals: O. Dittrich, *Geschichte der Ethik. Die Systeme der Moral vom Altertum bis zur Gegenwart*, 3 vols., Leipzig, 1926. On the Catacombs and primitive Christian art: Dom H. Leclercq, art. *Catacombes*, in *Dict. d'Archéologie chrét. et de Liturgie*, Vol. II, 2nd part, Paris, 1910, cols. 2376 et seq.; F. Fornari, *San Sebastiano*, Rome, 1933; E. Josi, *Il cimitero di Callisto*, Rome, 1933; J. P. Kirsch, *Die christliche Epigraphik und ihre Bedeutung für die Kirchengeschichtliche Forschung*, Fribourg in Switzerland, 1898, and *Sull' origine dei motivi iconografici nella pittura cimiteriale di Roma*, in *Rivista di Archeologia cristiana*, Vol. IV, 1927, pp. 259 et seq.; E. Le Blant, *Etude sur les sarcophages chrétiens de la ville d'Arles*, Paris, 1878.

lapse of time, and the disciples of Jesus were better known in the third century than in the second.

### *Participation in Civic Life*

Though the prescriptions of Christian morality continued to restrict their share in civic life, or rather to differentiate it in many ways from that of other citizens of the Empire, their participation was none the less real. And though it was not general, and certainly not practised in the same degree everywhere, we have evidence of it in the shape of precise testimonies from one extreme of the Empire to the other.

### *The Canons of the Council of Elvira concerning Municipal Magistrates*

Spain on the one hand and Asia on the other provide us with examples of Christians in the third century exercising municipal functions. True, the document which is the source of our information concerning Spain does not represent the authorities as adopting a very encouraging attitude in this matter; but even so, we must try to get a proper idea of its significance. We refer to the Canons of the Council of Elvira (Illiberis) held about the year 300.<sup>2</sup> One of these canons, the 56th, stipulates that the duumvirs, or magistrates presiding over the government of cities, should abstain from attending church during their year of office. We gather from this that there were Christian duumvirs, but the carrying out of their functions made it very difficult for them to avoid all contact with pagan worship. Hence the decree issued by the Council—a decree which in fact is undeniably moderate in character, and which shows that the Spanish bishops did not wish absolutely to forbid the faithful to accept the office of magistrates, and thus relinquish them entirely to the pagans. We are not surprised that other canons, 2 to 4 and 55, are much more severe in regard to Christians who had accepted the office of flamen, which constituted a provincial or municipal priesthood, doubtless already half secularised and honorary rather than really religious, but even so implying the officiating at ceremonies which could not be approved by the Church. The Council plainly condemns Christian flamens, except such as contented

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 1118.



themselves with wearing the crown which was its insignia and did not take part in any sacrifice: these might be admitted to Communion after two years of penance.<sup>3</sup> We gather from this that at the end of the third century Christians were so far from being indifferent towards public life that many of them went too far in the contrary direction and did not hesitate to undertake duties which, as their spiritual leaders felt compelled to remind them with the threat of grave penalties, were more or less incompatible with their beliefs and the obligations which followed from these.

In this matter we must bear in mind that, judging from certain other decisions of this same Council of Elvira, the Spanish Church was probably particularly severe in its attitude. The canons of the Council give an impression of rigorism, one might almost say of Puritanism, which would suggest that from the early ages Christian Spain displayed a strong current in the direction of asceticism and the reprobation of anything that seemed to compromise with the spirit of the world. We have already seen<sup>4</sup> that the Council of Elvira had made continence a strict obligation for the ministers of the altar; it also severed idolators from the communion of the Church for ever (canons 1 and 3); it not only condemned loans for interest (canon 20), which were disapproved of by all the Fathers, but it added the penalty of excommunication, and it forbade images in the churches (canon 36).

### *The Christians of Asia and Municipal Life*

The tendencies were not at all the same in Asia, a land where life was easy, and where we may well believe that severe measures would not have met with much success, although the penitential discipline there was very strict, perhaps by way of reaction,<sup>5</sup> and

<sup>3</sup> On this question of the Christian flamens, cf. L. Duchesne, *Le concile d'Elvire et les Flamines Chrétiens*, in *Mélanges Renier*, Paris, 1887, pp. 171 *et seq.* From the fourth century, the flamenate was wholly secularised, in spite of the internal contradiction which this involved, and it became a dignity which it was altogether normal for a Christian to accept. Cf. the end of the article *Flamen*, by Camille Jullian, in *Dictionnaire des Antiquités grecques et romaines* of Daremberg and Saglio; Pallu de Lessert, *Fastes des provinces africaines*, Vol. II, Paris, 1901, p. 352; J. Carcopino, *La table de patronat de Timgad*, in *Revue africaine*, Vol. LVII, 1913, pp. 163 *et seq.*

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 1107.

<sup>5</sup> Compare for instance certain canons of the Council of Elvira such as canon 5 with the Council of Ancyra (canons 22-23) prescribing many years of penance after a murder even though unpremeditated.

Christians knew how to die there as elsewhere when necessary.

Moreover, it was in the East that Christianity had made the most rapid conquests, and we need not be surprised to find that, in provinces in which at the end of the third century the Christians formed already the majority or an important minority of the population, they were more closely enmeshed in their surroundings, and less and less removed from the general life of cities. Several Asiatic inscriptions show us Christian members of their municipal curia, busy about the affairs of their city, its prosperity, and its honour.<sup>6</sup> In more than one martyr's *Passion*, we find simple believers or members of the clergy enjoying particular consideration on the part of their fellow citizens. These latter were, it is true, capable of becoming suddenly pitiless adversaries in the time of persecution, but sometimes they retained even then their esteem and sympathy for Christians, and did not spare their efforts to save them from tortures.<sup>7</sup>

### *Christians in the Imperial Court and in the Chief Magistracies*

Need we recall once more the details given by Eusebius concerning the great personages in the Court and the high magistrates in the Empire who professed Christianity, and were in the time of Diocletian dispensed by the imperial good will from assisting at pagan ceremonies?<sup>8</sup> There were often indeed, from Septimius Severus to Diocletian, Christians in the imperial palace, and the names found in inscriptions in various places reveal conversions to Christianity among families in which participation in public life had not ceased to be a tradition.

## § 2. THE QUESTION OF MILITARY SERVICE

### *Christians in the Army*

More truly citizens of the earthly fatherland than has sometimes been thought, Christians similarly did not hesitate to become its

<sup>6</sup> Cf. W. Ramsay, *Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia*, in *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 1883, pp. 424 *et seq.*; 1887, pp. 16 *et seq.*; 1898, pp. 722 *et seq.*; F. Cabrol and H. Leclercq, *Monumenta Ecclesiæ liturgica*, Paris, 1902, Vol. I, nos. 2787, 2790; F. Cumont, *Les inscriptions de l'Asie Mineure*, nos. 137, 145, 146, 162, 168, 177, 178, in *Mélanges d'Archéologie et d'Histoire* published by the French School in Rome, Vol. XV, 1895, pp. 245 *et seq.*

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Bk. III, p. 796 and p. 799, n. 37.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Bk. III, pp. 809 *et seq.*

soldiers, charged with its defence, and perhaps even with its extension. Accordingly we find numbers of them in the Roman armies at a time when military service was obligatory only for the sons of veterans or in the cases, increasingly infrequent, of extraordinary levies. The "purge" to which Galerius had recourse on the threshold of the fourth century<sup>1</sup> is the best proof that, from the end of the second to that of the third century, despite a current of hostility to the profession of arms fortified by the intransigence of Tertullian, a "conscientious objection" was not felt by the majority.

### *The "Conscientious Objection" of the Intellectuals*

It existed nevertheless, and even spread. Tertullian was responsible for this in the first place, by reason of the evolution which led him on to an ever greater intransigence. But certain admonitions on the part of Celsus,<sup>2</sup> exhorting Christians not to be backward in the service of the emperor, even in the army, would seem to indicate that there was in some circles a certain lukewarmness in this matter. But so far we know of no anti-militarist Christian declaration. In the *Apologeticum*, which appeared in 197, Tertullian boasted that Christianity had believers everywhere, including the army. Fourteen years later, when he had become a Montanist, he praised, in his *De corona militis*, the Christian soldier who on the occasion of the distribution of a *donativum* had refused to wear the laurel wreath which was required in the circumstances, and preferred the condemnation which was bound to ensue to an action which he regarded as opposed to his faith. Even so, it follows from this narrative that his Christian comrades did not imitate him.

Tertullian tried to erect an exceptional case of reckless heroism into a general rule. His words, though coming from an already heretical mouth, were not without effect, especially as he returned to the matter with even greater force a few months later in a new treatise, *De idololatria*. In this he laid down the principle that military service is absolutely incompatible with the profession of Christianity, in view of the obligation incumbent even upon simple soldiers to be present at sacrifices and to use the sword, for this, he maintained, is condemned by the Gospel. This was tantamount to forbidding Christians absolutely to enter the army. We can under-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *infra*, pp. 1186 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> According to Origen, *Contra Celsum*, VIII, lxxii.

stand that these reasonings made an impression on numerous minds. Starting with Tertullian, then, the question of military service was one which presented itself to Christians, and it was generally answered in his sense.

Given certain premisses, reasoning itself was in favour of this thesis. Accordingly we find it adopted in the ranks of Christians, especially by the intellectuals, though with modifications. But such reasoning could easily lead to illogical results. Origen, addressing the pagans in his *Contra Celsum*, says that, while soldiers were fighting, Christians served the Empire by their prayers and virtues, but they had to keep their hands pure from blood, "like the priests of your idols and the attendants of your gods."<sup>3</sup> Lactantius, at the commencement of the following century, repeats once more that the obligation of a soldier to shed blood makes it impossible for Christians to take up the profession of arms.<sup>4</sup> This teaching had its results, as we see in the time of Diocletian on the eve of the renewal of persecution when there were some cases of refusals of military service.<sup>5</sup>

### *Opposition between Theories and Practice*

But it is indeed striking that these were never more than isolated cases and, in exhorting these pacifists to return to a better frame of mind, the leaders put before them the examples of their Christian comrades, as happened in the case of the hero in the *De corona*.<sup>6</sup> True, from the *Passions* of military martyrs which have come down to us—and their number is not to be despised<sup>7</sup>—we do not gather that Christians were ever in the Army in large numbers, but it is also true that they do not figure there as exceptions. The reasoning of Tertullian or even of Origen, which the ecclesiastical magisterium did not adopt as its own, cannot therefore have had a far reaching effect. The position of Origen, great man as he was, could not be regarded as tenable, for he recognised that the Empire had to have its defenders, adding that Christians could only pray for them.

<sup>3</sup> *Contra Celsum*, VIII, lxxiii.

<sup>4</sup> *De institutione divina*, v, 18.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. e.g. the *Acta S. Maximiliani*.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Cf. H. Delehaye, *Les légendes grecques des saints militaires*, Paris, 1909, p. 1. The writer even describes this number as "relatively considerable." That perhaps gives a somewhat exaggerated idea of the proportion. But it must be admitted that the *Passions* do not tell us everything.

The comparison he introduced with the pagan priesthood was ingenious, but illusory. Though applicable to the Christian clergy, a moment's reflection showed that it was unacceptable for the Christian people as a whole, unless it were accepted that these would always be in a minority in the Empire, and this could not have been Origen's idea. If the day should come when there were not more citizens than Christians, could the latter refuse to be responsible for the former? The ideal of perfection such as that of the monastic life has never been set forth other than as the privilege of a select few; if this ideal should become that of the whole human race, the days of the race would be numbered. Similarly, there was an obvious antinomy between the ideas of Tertullian and Origen on military service, that is, the service of the earthly fatherland which the Church herself said it was their duty to serve, and the programme of winning all men to the faith of Christ, which has ever been that of the Church in all ages. That is why the reasonings of jurists such as Tertullian or of philosophers like Lactantius have never become the teaching of the Church. A document which we may attribute to the third century, and which has perhaps some connection with Rome, known under the name of the *Canons of Hippolytus*, may reflect a state of mind similar to that of Tertullian and Origen. But the title of this work is certainly not sufficient to lead us to regard it as an official document emanating from the Church of Rome. The good sense of the people resisted these theories or ignored them, and Christians continued, in greater or less numbers, to serve in the army. And other illustrious Christian thinkers such as Clement of Alexandria, Origen's own master, explicitly defended the compatibility of the profession of the Christian religion with the military profession like all others, as for instance those of sailors and farmers: "Are you a peasant? cultivate the earth, but in cultivating it, confess God. Do you prefer to sail the seas? Sail on, but pray to the heavenly pilot. Were you a soldier when the Christian faith won you? Listen to the leader whose watchword is justice."<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> *Protrepticus*, x, 100. It will perhaps be objected that, when speaking to the soldier, Clement does not tell him explicitly to continue, as he does the two others, and indeed that the imperfect tense instead of the present might indicate a different idea. But the close connection with the two others would seem to exclude any hesitation, and this triple admonition is, in truth, only a paraphrase of the words of St. Paul: "Let every man abide in the same calling in which he was called" (1 Cor., vii, 20). We might also mention the passage in *Luke*, iii, 14,

The narratives of the persecutions under Decius and Valerian show Christian soldiers called upon to decide for or against their faith: hence there were still such. Some rose to the position of officer, like the *optio* Marinus, whose story is told by Eusebius.<sup>9</sup> Denounced as a Christian by a comrade who hoped to occupy his place, he was put to death at Cæsarea in Palestine about 260. For the rest, Christian officers and soldiers had become so numerous during the period of peace which had begun with Gallienus and ended only towards the close of the reign of Diocletian, that the renewal of the persecution began on the initiative of Galerius, Diocletian's Cæsar, with a purging of the army. Indeed, it seems that some rejoined when their time had finished, for some of the condemnations in connection with this military persecution under Galerius were of Christians described as veterans.<sup>10</sup>

It would therefore be a great exaggeration to say that the ordinary practice of Christians was to refuse military service. Such refusal was, for a century, a theory of moralists, not the teaching of the ecclesiastical magisterium, and not the ordinary reaction of the faithful to the question when it arose. Moreover, as the consequences involved in this intransigent conception did not affect ordinary life for, apart from the exceptions mentioned, people did not become soldiers unless they wished to do so, this theory would seem not to have radically separated the Christians from other citizens of the Empire, even if it had become more widespread. It would only have constituted a peculiar feature, leading certainly to an unfavourable opinion in their regard, but not one which made them rebels in the ordinary course of things. It would not constitute a special and, if we may use the term, secessionist characteristic of the Christian attitude towards the Roman Empire.

### § 3. PUBLIC WORSHIP

#### *Churches in the Third Century*

Christians, then, did not withdraw from the life of the city. Hence there was no reason for them to conceal themselves when

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on the preaching of St. John the Baptist: "The soldiers also asked him: 'And what shall we do?' And he said to them: 'Do violence to no man; neither calumniate any man, and be content with your pay.'" We see that there is no criticism here of the profession itself.

<sup>9</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xv. Cf. Bk. III, p. 807.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. *infra*, p. 1187.

the civic power did not begin hostilities against them. And accordingly we find that, during the ever lengthening periods of peace in the third century, their worship, hitherto divided between the secrecy or half-secrecy of private houses and occasionally that of the catacombs, began to be celebrated in buildings belonging to their communities, and which were open and public, in other words, in churches like our own. The existence of such churches in the third century is beyond question: the texts and archæological discoveries exclude the slightest doubt in this matter.

### *Churches in Rome and Italy*

Does not the *Chronicle* of Edessa in the year 201 already speak of the church of the city,<sup>1</sup> the "temple of the Christian church," as it calls it, and say that this was destroyed by a flood? Here, then, we have a Christian edifice going back at least to the end of the second century. Several others are known by their remains which were still to be seen in the following century. Recent excavations have brought to light in Rome some portions of the church with the title of Clement—doubtless the name of the founder—which was prior to the fourth century basilica, itself replaced in the eleventh century by the present Basilica of St. Clement.<sup>2</sup> This edifice consisted of a collection of buildings with a large central space, forming the church itself used for liturgical assemblies, while around it were dwellings for the clergy and various offices on several floors. Also there have been found beneath the Roman church of St. Martin in the Hills some traces of the large earlier chapel called *Titulus Equitii* or *Silvestri*. Here there was a large rectangular hall, divided into two parts by a line of pillars and pilasters, and occupying the whole length of the ground floor of the house planned to hold the clergy and the various services connected with the church. It seems to go back to the period of the Severi.<sup>3</sup> At Rome again, archeological research in the churches of St. Anastasia and SS. John and Paul

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Bk. III, p. 768.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. E. Junyent, *Il titolo di San Clemente in Roma*, in *Studi di antichità cristiana pubblicati per cura del Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia cristiana*, Vol. VI, Rome, 1932.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. R. Vielliard, *Les origines du titre de Saint Martin-aux-Monts*, *ibid.*, Vol. IV, Rome, 1931.

has indicated the existence of large halls for worship going back to the third century.<sup>4</sup> The same seems to have been the case of St. Sabina.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, we can only register a mark of interrogation on the subject of St. Pudentiana.<sup>6</sup> At Aquileia, there are remains of a Christian building, also attributable to the third century, beneath the present basilica.<sup>7</sup>

### *Churches in the East*

A few years ago, researches undertaken in Palestine at one of the sites capable of being identified with the Emmaus of the Gospel, namely Amwas, resulted in the discovery of an important basilica which, it is thought, may date back to the reign of Elagabalus.<sup>8</sup> Finally, some unusually fortunate discoveries at Dura-Europos, on the Euphrates frontier of the Empire, have revealed to us a chapel belonging at the latest to the last years preceding the capture of the city by the Persians (256). It was decorated throughout with paintings recalling those of the Roman catacombs though possessing a marked originality.<sup>9</sup> In addition to the chapel thus decorated, there was also at Dura a baptistry, itself decorated with frescoes, and vari-

<sup>4</sup> E. Junyent, *La maison romaine du titre de Sainte-Anastasie*, in *Rivista di Archeologie cristiana*, Vol. VII, 1930, pp. 91 *et seq.*, where also there is some information concerning SS. John and Paul.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. H. Marrou, *Sur les origines du titre romain de Sainte-Sabine*, in *Archivium Prædicatorum*, Vol. II, 1932, pp. 316 *et seq.*

<sup>6</sup> The very interesting excavations recently made at St. Pudentiana, an account of which is given by A. Petrucci (La basilica di Santa Pudenziana in Roma secondo gli scavi recentemente eseguiti, Rome, 1934), does not as yet provide any basis for the affirmation of the existence of the *titulus Pudentis* before the Peace of the Church. In this title legend has found the name of the senator Cornelius Pudens who is said to have welcomed Peter to Rome. The excavations have only established a connection, still indefinite, between the house which preceded the Christian sanctuary and a certain Q. Servilius Pudens, who was perhaps the consul of this name in 166.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *La basilica di Aquileia, a cura del comitato per le ceremonie celebrative del IXe Centenario della basilica*, Bologna, 1933, and G. Brusin, *Gli Scavi di Aquileia, Un quadriennio di attivita dell' Associazione nazionale per Aquileia*, 1929-1932, Udine, 1934.

<sup>8</sup> H. Vincent and M. Abel, *Emmaus, sa basilique et son histoire*, Paris, 1932. "The basilica seems to have been one of the buildings which the ancient Emmaus, raised to the rank of a Roman city under the name of Neapolis, owed to Julius Africanus, who originally lived there" (P. Peeters, *Bulletin des publications hagiographiques*, in *Analecta Bollandiana*, Vol. LI, 1933, p. 381).

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *infra*, pp. 1181 *et seq.*



ous annexes, an archivium, a treasury, and doubtless also a lodging for the priest, constituting a *domus ecclesia*.<sup>10</sup>

The above are merely a few examples.<sup>11</sup> In addition, we know that Gregory Thaumaturgus erected his episcopal church in the midst of the city of Neocæsarea.<sup>12</sup> The *Didascalia Apostolorum*<sup>13</sup> implies that the worship described therein was celebrated in suitable buildings which were already real churches, and two other valuable testimonies, one from the pagan philosopher Porphyry,<sup>14</sup> complaining of the ample edifices, μέγιστους οἴκους, which Christians were constructing in his time (between 270 and 280), and the other from Eusebius, describing how, in the period between the Valerian and Diocletian persecutions, great churches were built, combine to show us that at least for numerous and lengthy periods, the cultural life of the Church of the third century had ceased to take place in secret.<sup>15</sup>

#### § 4. THE TENDENCIES TOWARDS LAXITY

##### *The Contagion of the World*

While the morals of Christians remained in the third century more or less what they were previously, what we may call the gen-

<sup>10</sup> Cf. M. J. Rostovtzeff, *La dernière campagne de fouilles de Doura-Europos*, in *Comptes-rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, 1932, pp. 314 et seq.; *The Excavations at Dura-Europos conducted by Yale University and the French Academy of Inscriptions and Letters, Preliminary Report of Fifth Session of Work*, Oct. 1931-March 1932, edited by M. J. Rostovtzeff (the study of the Christian chapel in chs. vii and viii is by C. Hopkins), New Haven, 1934. See also: F. Cumont, *Fresques chrétiennes du III<sup>e</sup> siècle découvertes en Syrie*, in *Byzantion*, Vol. VII, 1932, pp. 511 et seq.; Du Mesnil du Buisson, *Rapport sur la sixième campagne de fouilles à Doura-Europos (Syrie)*, in *Comptes-rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, 1933, pp. 200 et seq.; G. de Jerphanion, *Bulletin d'archéologie chrétienne*, in *Orientalia Christiana*, Vol. XXVIII, 1932, pp. 377 et seq.; N. Aubert, *Les fouilles de Doura-Europos, Note sur les origines de l'iconographie chrétienne*, in *Bulletin Monumental*, 1934, pp. 397 et seq.

<sup>11</sup> On the various Christian churches recently discovered, see J. P. Kirsch, *Die vorkonstantinischen christlichen Kulturgebäude in Lichte der neuesten Entdeckungen im Osten*, in *Römische Quartalschrift*, Vol. XLIV, 1933, pp. 15 et seq.

<sup>12</sup> St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Discourse on the Life of St. Gregory Thaumaturgus* (Migne, P.G., Vol. XLVI, col. 923).

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Bk. III, pp. 713 et seq. and *supra*, pp. 1000 et seq.

<sup>14</sup> Fr., 76. On the fragments of Porphyry, cf. Vol. III, pp. 887 et seq.

<sup>15</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VIII, i, 5-6. Cf. Bk. III, p. 808.

eral tone of Christian life differed somewhat from what it was in the second century. For Christians were ever increasing in numbers, and, from the little flock which they still formed at the beginning of the Antonine era, they became progressively a minority not to be neglected, and in some cases a considerable one. Indeed, in certain regions they were on the point of forming the majority of the population. By the very fact of their increase they were involved to a greater extent in the common life, to which they brought the leaven of a higher ideal; but at the same time they were affected more and more by their closer contact with their surroundings. This acted like a kind of contagion, and while the ideal itself was not lowered, the proportion of Christians whose life fully reflected it tended rather to diminish as their total numbers increased. The heroic tension of the first two centuries was relaxed, especially during the periods of peace which intervened between persecutions which were indeed more general than previously and momentarily more implacable, but at the same time more limited in their duration.

### *Relaxation and Asceticism*

Briefly, the worldly spirit gained ground among the Christians, or at least increased its influence somewhat upon them, as Christianity progressed in the world. This serves to explain practices which would probably have astonished the faithful of the first two centuries. Convinced and sincere Christians deferred their baptism, lacking the courage required in fulfilling all its obligations. On the other hand, penance became more accessible; though purity of life remained always a strict obligation upon the faithful, who could not fail in continence outside marriage without grave fault, the modification by Pope Callistus of the penitential discipline on this matter is a sufficiently revealing indication of a lowering of morals which was almost inevitable in view of the growth of the original little flock. True, at the opposite pole to the lukewarm and the weak there were also rigorists, who endeavoured to propagate a morality more severe than that of the Gospel. Thus the Encratites (ἐγκρατεῖς, *continentes*) nourished their zeal by the narratives of the apocryphal books, gospels not received by the Church, or pious romances falsely represented as histories of the apostles, such as the so-called *Acts* of Paul, John, Peter, Andrew and Thomas,<sup>1</sup> some of which go back to

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *supra*, pp. 986 *et seq.*

the second half of the second century while others belong to the beginning of the third. These all preached abstention from marriage and from the use of meat and wine. The exaggerations of these Encratites threatened indeed to do harm to true asceticism. Yet we find some of them perhaps among the best Christians, such as Alcibiades in the second century, who was one of the Lyons martyrs, and in the third century the martyr Pionius at Smyrna,<sup>2</sup> who seems, according to his *Passion*, to have adopted the Encratite custom of consecrating the Eucharist with bread and water.<sup>3</sup>

While the Church always regarded the Encratite exaggerations with disfavour, she encouraged, as we have seen, the ascetical practices of a chosen few, such as continence and voluntary virginity.<sup>4</sup> These chosen few might serve as a model and an encouragement for the mass of people, to whom indeed ordinary morality already presented sufficient difficulties. Even the clergy, when relaxation set in at a time when heroism might be laid aside, did not always set a good example. When, after the Decian persecution, the Christian people of the dioceses of Legio and Asturica, and of Emerita, rose against the two bishops, Basilides and Martial, who had asked for or accepted certificates of sacrifice,<sup>5</sup> other complaints were brought forward also, or at least against one of them, for Martial of Emerita had been seen frequenting the profane feasts of a burial college. St. Cyprian, who had to pronounce on his case, tells us also that in his time there were too many bishops who were business men, accepting positions in the administration of estates, frequenting markets and practising usury.

### *The Church and Usury*

The last-mentioned matter was nevertheless one of those on which the moralists of Christian antiquity always displayed the greatest severity. Lending money at interest was universally condemned by the Fathers,<sup>6</sup> doubtless because it was condemned also

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Bk. III, p. 796.

<sup>3</sup> At any rate it is said that on the morning of the day of his arrest he had taken *panem sanctum et aquam*. Cf. also the letter of St. Cyprian (*Epist.*, lxiii) to Cæcilius concerning this abuse.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 1105.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Bk. III, p. 794.

<sup>6</sup> Numerous texts, with a general outline of the question, will be found in I. Seipel, *Die Wirtschaftsethischen Lehren der Kirchenväter*, Vienna, 1907, pp. 162 *et seq.*

in the Bible,<sup>7</sup> because it had not then the function which it possesses in the modern world,<sup>8</sup> and because by reason of the abuse to which it was inherently liable, it was not distinguished from usury properly so called and which for us is characterised by an excessive rate of interest.<sup>9</sup> This is a matter always difficult to determine, and the condemnation in principle of a practice without which one can hardly imagine the economic life of to-day was not unaccompanied by the drawback of leading to almost inevitable financial failures. The sanctions such as those laid down by the Council of Elvira<sup>10</sup> are a most evident proof that such failures were at that time fairly frequent among the faithful. The letters of St. Cyprian reveal that bad examples came from those in high places.<sup>11</sup> The Bishop of Antioch, Paul of Samosata, who was deposed in 268 because of the heresies he professed, gave an especially bad example. In him we have already the type of the ostentatious prelate, savouring more of this world than of Christ, and to whom money counted for much. He combined with his episcopal functions a high position in the public finances.

<sup>7</sup> For instance, St. Cyprian (*Testimoniorum libri tres*, III, xlviii) condemns usury because we read in *Psalm* 14: "quia pecuniam non dedit ad usuram, non movebitur in æternum," and in *Ezechiel*: "homo qui erit justus . . . pecuniam suam in usuram non dabit."

<sup>8</sup> On the essentially parasitical nature of usury in ancient times, in a state of things in which "the activity of capitalists was foreign to the creation of values," cf. the penetrating pages of G. Salvioli, *Le capitalisme dans le monde antique, Etude sur l'histoire de l'économie romaine* (French translation by A. Bonnet, Paris, 1906), pp. 227-228, and especially pp. 238-242. Various texts, among them being Lactantius, *Epitome*, lxiv, and *Divin. institut.*, vi, 18, and St. Hilary, *Tract. in psalm.*, xiv, xv, show that loans the interest on which was condemned were regarded only as a service rendered to a man momentarily embarrassed, so that it would be wrong to profit by his difficulties in asking back more than one had lent to him.

<sup>9</sup> Tertullian (*Adversus Marcionem*, iv, 17) seems however, at first sight, to distinguish *usura* from *fœnus* or loans at interest, *usura* being according to him the *redundantia* of these. But it is evident that the *fœnus* itself is regarded by him as incompatible with evangelical morality. See also the expression of Cyprian quoted on p. 1039, n. 1. On the other hand, it would seem from the canons of fourth century councils concerning usury in clerics that usury on the part of the ordinary faithful may have been tolerated provided it was confined within moderate limits, or at any rate it was not accompanied by ecclesiastical penalties. St. Ambrose will even say (*Expositio evangelica*, IX, 19) that there may be "good bankers."

<sup>10</sup> Canons 19 and 20.

<sup>11</sup> He also says in the *De lapsis*, vi, that during the long period of peace preceding the Decian persecution, there were many bishops who practised usury—"usuris multiplicantibus fœnus augere."

*The Wealth of the Churches*

Further, the development of ecclesiastical property, rapidly increasing through the liberality of the faithful, caused Christian leaders already at this time to resemble earthly potentates, and though they may have been characterised by personal asceticism, they came to be regarded as the holders of enviable material positions. Already in the third century the Bishop of Rome was an important personage and his office also important in the eyes even of the Roman authorities, who may perhaps have attributed to him sometimes more than he really possessed. As soon as Pope Sixtus had been put to death in the Valerian persecution,<sup>12</sup> his first deacon, Laurence, was—at least if we are to believe the account of St. Ambrose, better informed perhaps on the motives than on the circumstances of the martyr's sufferings<sup>13</sup>—called upon to give up the treasures which were thought to belong to the Church. Probably their amount was over estimated, but they were not imaginary, and this wealth, though originating from and destined for Christian charity, combined with the moral prestige of the position of the holders, was not free from the danger of dazzling and upsetting the balance of those honoured with its charge.

*The Church and the Age. Adjustments and Contaminations*

If there were shepherds who thus succumbed to temptations to pride or to the spirit of lucre, these were only individual human weaknesses, an almost inevitable consequence of the numerical extension of the Church and of the external growth of its authority. Some other contaminations with the spirit of the age seem stranger: The special opponent of Paul of Samosata, Malchion, was "director of the Hellenic school" at Antioch, that is, he superintended a school the teaching of which was of pagan inspiration—a very extraordinary post for a Christian. "Anatoleus the mathematician, head of the Aristotelian school of Alexandria, was raised to the episcopate towards the end of the third century; the director of the imperial factory of purple established at Tyre was a priest of Antioch."<sup>14</sup> We have already mentioned<sup>15</sup> that believers in Christ had

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Bk. III, p. 803.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Bk. III, p. 803, n. 6.

<sup>14</sup> Duchesne, *Histoire ancienne de l'Eglise*, Vol. I, p. 521.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. *supra*, pp. 1153-1154.

consented to become flamens of their cities, that is, pagan priests. It was indeed a singular situation, and one which was paradoxical from a twofold point of view. In the years preceding the final persecution, the Government showed itself so complaisant that to meet the Christian holders of the official priesthood it arranged for a modification of the religious obligations which these offices implied. "It was possible to be high priest of Rome and Augustus without offering sacrifice to these official divinities,"<sup>16</sup> the cult of which had by now ceased to be really religious. That is doubtless the reason why Christians consented to hold offices which had thus been secularised, but none the less this constituted an abuse and a certain scandal and we can understand why the Council of Elvira condemned it, though as we have remarked the condemnation was a somewhat severe one.

We can at least infer once more from such practices<sup>17</sup> that the Church did not frown upon the Empire as much as has sometimes been said, and that the Empire did not always adopt a warlike attitude towards her. As has so often been the case throughout history, two tendencies existed among the Christians of that time: that of the intransigents, to follow whom meant, if things were pushed to an extreme, putting oneself outside ordinary life; and that of the conciliators, who were quite ready for the necessary adaptations, but some of whom gradually came near to forgetting that they were Christians.

## § 5. THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF CHRISTIANS

### *Renewal of Trials*

These accommodations and adaptations, sometimes carried too far, are explicable only by the lengthy periods of peace which, divided by sudden and terrible outbreaks of renewed hostility, characterised the relations between the Church and the Empire throughout the third century. These lasting periods of calm certainly

<sup>16</sup> Duchesne, *Histoire ancienne de l'Eglise*, Vol. I, p. 521.

<sup>17</sup> We must distinguish these adaptations from the fact that there were Christians not only among those connected with the stage, which was then characterised by a permanent immorality, but also among the gladiators, and even among women of the city and pimps. But these were, of course, professions which were incompatible with evangelical morality, and which a Christian could take up or retain only at the price of that discord between belief and conduct, examples of which are to be found in all times, and which in no way imply any change in the requirements of Christian ethics.

counted for much in this comparative slackening of the Christian springs of life, which, it must indeed be admitted, manifested itself from time to time when a sudden call for heroism sounded upon ears unprepared for it. At these times there were innumerable apostasies, as first of all in the Decian persecution, which at one time could give the Emperor the illusion of victory in the inexorable fight renewed at his orders against Christianity. On the other hand, the equally implacable measures of Valerian, coming as they did very soon after those of Decius, and finding Christian souls stiffened by the recent trials, met straightaway with a passive resistance which, while decimating the ranks of Christians, signalled at the same time the defeat of the imperial power in its new war.

When Diocletian unleashed the persecution for the last time, after forty peaceful years, we once more encounter many collapses. We also see several people clever enough to escape both heroism and capitulation. But heroes were not lacking—indeed, no persecution produced as many as did this final assault which, in some provinces, continued for ten years.

### *The Sources of Christian Heroism: Prayer*

The race of heroes never died out, for never, even in the periods of relative ease, did that which was its constant source cease to flow: namely, the religious life itself of the Christian—a life maintained by participation in the sacred mysteries and by prayer, liturgical and collective, as we have mentioned elsewhere,<sup>1</sup> which accompanied it, and also by intimate, private or domestic prayer which, as in earlier times<sup>2</sup> and in those which followed, was one of the distinctive features of the daily life of the disciples of Christ. Prayer, from the morning and evening vocal invocations to the meditation which was cultivated by souls aiming at an ideal of interior life and which was already guided by masters such as Cyprian, Clement of Alexandria or Origen, remained throughout an integral part of a Christian's day.

### *Christian Spirituality and Theology*

In some cases, prayer was accompanied by intellectual enquiries of a religious character, and an endeavour to reach a greater knowl-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Bk. II, pp. 456 *et seq.*, and Bk. III, pp. 696-698, 746.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Bk. II, p. 507.

edge of the truths of faith. Clement of Alexandria and Origen, their successors in the Catechetical School of Alexandria, Hippolytus at Rome, and their imitators elsewhere, all had their disciples. Lucian of Antioch, even in his Christological errors, and Lactantius in his apologetical works,<sup>3</sup> were inspired by the same spirit. The desire of all, even of those who were aware that they were not addressing themselves to ordinary people, and possibly had no intention of doing so, was nevertheless to reach an ever increasing audience.

### *Christianity and Culture*

On the other hand, if we leave aside those doubtful Christians attracted by Syncretistic dreams,<sup>4</sup> there was scarcely any regard amongst Christians as such for profane culture. Yet those who belonged to the classes which were traditionally given to culture did not in fact renounce it, especially as it might be utilised in defence of Christian truth. A good apologist should make use even of the arms of his opponent, and more than one Christian writer wielded them with a dexterity which shows that it was still quite natural to employ them. "The culture of an Origen was in no way inferior to that of a Celsus. . . . The correspondence of Julius the African with Origen . . . manifests the serious tone of their criticism."<sup>5</sup> Commodian put poetry, and Arnobius and Lactantius philosophy to the service of Christ; they found their readers, and this shows that there was no divorce between culture and Christianity.

But as long as the situation of the Church in the midst of the Roman world remained precarious, the primary interests of Christians were other than intellectual, and it was not possible that, in the presence of a renewal of persecutions which in the name of the ancient discipline massacred them in their thousands, Christians should have seen anything attractive in the real face of ancient culture. It had indeed a singularly cruel countenance.

### *The Taste for Apocryphal Literature*

The mass of the faithful could not in any case be much interested in speculation. But what a taste they had for literature of a particu-

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *supra*, pp. 1086, 1090 *et seq.*

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Bk. III, pp. 875 *et seq.*

<sup>5</sup> P. de Labriolle, *La réaction païenne*, p. 11.



lar kind! The spate of apocryphal works, imaginary *Gospels* or pretended *Acts of Apostles*,<sup>6</sup> implies the presence of an abundant public ready to read them. True, a fairly large number of them emanated from Gnostic or heterodox sources. Nevertheless the fairly widespread knowledge of these works in the great Church, and their relatively long vogue make us think that they were esteemed not only in circles which were doctrinally unsound. Did not some of them, such as those concerning the infancy of the Blessed Virgin, end by finding an entry even into Christian tradition?<sup>7</sup>

### *Christians and the Supreme Sacrifice*

Yet it was not in the suspect teaching of this questionable religious literature, any more than in the most attractive features of pagan literature, unknown or little known by the majority, that Christians found their rule of life, and still less the strength to die. The sources of their heroism were only those which the Church authentically offered them in the name of the true Christ, and the attitude of so many martyrs, who invoke only his love—love received and love given—as a motive for the sacrifice of their lives, proves this abundantly.

How many indeed were called upon to make this supreme sacrifice in the period we are studying? Though the third century was a period of discontinuous persecutions, beginning and ending at precise orders from the secular power, instead of the permanent menace with its sporadic and intermittent though frequent realisation found in the preceding century, we must not overlook the fact that these persecutions were severe and general. The Diocletian persecution added to the violence and wideness which characterised those of Decius and Valerian a more lengthy duration.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *supra*, pp. 986 *et seq.*

<sup>7</sup> The Presentation of the Blessed Virgin as a child in the Temple to consecrate there her youth to God, which has been made the subject of a feast of the Church, is related only in the apocryphal gospel known as the *Protovangelium of James*. True, the presentation of a child in the Temple was prescribed by the Law, and there is no reason to doubt that Mary's parents carried out the required legal observances.

[The Old Law, however, contemplated only the presentation of a male child, and "there was no such thing as a legal presentation of daughters" (Rev. E. R. Hull, S.J., *First Book of Our Lady*, p. 22). Nor was there "any optional function for such a presentation in the levitical law" (*ibid.*). But there was a ceremony for the purification of the mother, and another for the redeeming of a child vowed to the Lord, and that may explain the Presentation of Our Lady.—Tr.]

Thus, no less than in the previous period, though in different conditions, with less continuity but perhaps with greater intensity, the thought of martyrdom was still in the third century one of the habitual ideas of a Christian. In order to get an exact idea of Christian life from the time of the Severi down to that of Diocletian, we have shown that it could be carried on openly, not apart from the general life, but on the contrary sharing in this, while keeping its own character in the midst of surroundings which became peaceful during several fairly long intervals. But opposition and even hatred had not altogether disappeared, and we find these still at work at the beginning of the Diocletian persecution, and peace was succeeded by war after more or less lengthy intervals. Besides days of calm and of life in the open, there were days of crisis, when the Church had, so to speak, to retire within herself and return to her hidden life.

## II. CHRISTIANS OUTSIDE THE WORLD

### § I. MARTYRDOM

#### *The Thought of Martyrdom*

In those periods of crisis, each Christian had to contemplate once more and keep before his eyes the prospect of martyrdom, and at Rome and elsewhere the Church returned to the catacombs and seemed almost prepared for a lengthy stay in these safe places, which even in better times she had never entirely abandoned.

The Christian literature of the third century is full of the idea of martyrdom. The *Ad martyres* of Tertullian, Origen's *Exhortation to the Martyrs*, some commentaries of Hippolytus and letters from Cyprian, are very significant in this respect.<sup>1</sup> These men had seen the shedding of the blood of "their friends, their neighbours, and disciples persecuted for the Faith, and some of them had written while awaiting the fatal moment when their own names would appear on the list of victims."<sup>2</sup> Martyrological narratives of an excellent character, in which the description of a tender love for Christ

<sup>1</sup> These texts are mentioned in H. Delehaye, *L'origine du culte des Martyrs*, 2nd edn., Brussels, 1933, pp. 4-5.

<sup>2</sup> Delehaye, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

and an ardent desire to suffer for him and be united to him thereby, are combined with a calmness of narration and a moderation of tone full of dignity, as in the African *Passion* of the deacon James and the lector Marianus, put to death at Lambesa in Numidia in 259.<sup>3</sup> These narratives display the same resignation, and trusting and filial spirit.

*The Number of the Martyrs in the Last Century of Persecution*

As to the number of these witnesses for Christ, who paid with their lives for their refusal to deny him, we can only say once more that it is quite impossible to give any precise estimate.<sup>4</sup> While the Decian persecution probably led to more temporary apostates than to martyrs, that of Valerian, which prohibited any religious assembly, must have been especially deadly. It is true that when Cyprian died at Carthage, his people all escorted him to the place of execution and do not seem to have met with any interference;<sup>5</sup> but the martyrs of the *Massa Candida*<sup>6</sup> certainly seem to have represented the whole Christian population of Utica, put to death with its shepherd. And in numerous *Passions* we read that spectators at an execution who gave any indication of sympathy for their brethren in the Faith about to die, were immediately put to torment with them. From the sober *Passion of James and Marianus* again we gather that for many days in the regions of Lambesa and Cirta alone, the executioners were constantly busy, methodically slaying in relays, first laity and then clergy. As to the Diocletian persecution, more intense than that of Valerian and four or five times longer, at least in the Eastern half of the Empire, it may be using a trite phrase but it is also the historic truth to say that, in spite of the still very numerous apostasies, torrents of blood were shed.<sup>7</sup> If the Roman Empire had a population of about a hundred millions, more than half being in the East, and if the East certainly comprised towards the end of the third century the strongest Christian minorities, which in some of the most populous provinces such as Asia Minor were on the way to becoming the majority, we may well ask what must have been the effect of an edict ordering the death of every Christian who did

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Bk. III, pp. 804-805.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Bk. II, pp. 516 *et seq.*

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Bk. III, p. 804.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Bk. III, p. 805.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. the figures on p. 1173, n. 8.

not abjure his faith. To infer that under these circumstances the number of victims must have exceeded a million would not be an absurdity in itself. But apart from the apostates, many Christians succeeded in hiding themselves, or in avoiding the interrogations. Doubtless the Roman police also—whether through carelessness or bribery—more than once closed their eyes, and there was a considerable difference in degree of cruelty between the theoretical stipulations of the law and its practical applications. The ease with which churches were reconstituted everywhere immediately after the tortures seems to imply that the majority of their members survived. But even if only one in every hundred perished, allowing that the number of Christians had multiplied tenfold from Septimius Severus to Diocletian, the total number of Christians put to death during the great periods of slaughter which succeeded one another at intervals, becoming less and less frequent but more and more deadly, from about the year 200 until the Peace of Constantine, would amount to hundreds of thousands. The largeness of the number certainly makes one hesitate, while on the other hand it is quite certain that the proportion of known martyrs to unknown victims, *quorum nomina Deus scit*, would then be a very small one. Must we infer, then, that there were more collapses than victims? The conclusion does not necessarily follow, whatever weaknesses may have been manifested under Decius and, at least in some provinces, under Diocletian. The *Passion of James and Marianus* <sup>8</sup> tells us that hundreds of Christians were decapitated at Lambesa in 259, yet we know the names of five only, James, Marianus, the Roman knight Aemilianus, and two young women, Tertulla and Antonia. The persecutions of the third century, and that of Diocletian which closed the era, were violent explosions occurring between long periods of calm: it does not necessarily follow that the number of martyrs was small.

### *Origins of the Cultus of Martyrs*

Witnesses to Christ, to whom they thus proved their love, and who in turn rewarded them accordingly in the heavenly kingdom, the martyrs were, in the eyes of their brethren remaining here

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 1172. Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VIII, ix, 3, speaks of tens and hundreds of victims perishing daily for years in the Thebaid during the last persecution.

below, glorious warriors who had a right to be honoured, and whose intercession could not fail to be powerful with God. From this idea alone, so natural, arose the cultus of the martyrs, which was to assume such proportions after the peace of the Church, but which began already in the second century. We see already in 155 the Pagan authorities refusing to allow the Christians of Smyrna to have the body of St. Polycarp, on the pretence that he would very soon have taken the place of Christ in the worship of the faithful,<sup>9</sup> and the church of that city, in the very letter in which it narrates the martyrdom of its venerated bishop, announces its resolution to celebrate each year the anniversary or *natale*, the day of the birth of the saint into everlasting life. A hundred years later, a triumphal procession conducted the body of St. Cyprian to the cemetery at Carthage. But while the earthly remains of heroes put to death for their faith were venerated in this way, their souls were also invoked as intercessors particularly potent with the Lord. From very early times, the custom of asking the prayers of the faithful who had died in the peace of the Lord was widespread; epigraphy provides abundant proof of this.<sup>10</sup> But naturally by preference people addressed their petitions to those among the dead whose exceptional merits rendered them particularly pleasing to God. Invocations thus tended to be more and more restricted to the martyrs, as is shown once more by epigraphy.<sup>11</sup> There are also literary texts attributing to the martyrs an especial power of intercession. Origen, exhorting his friend Ambrose to confess the faith, says to him that after his death his prayer will be even more efficacious for his own people than during his lifetime.<sup>12</sup> We find similar indications in the *Acts* of the martyrs. At Alexandria the martyr Potamiana, in return for the good offices of the soldier charged with the duty of conducting her to the torment, by name Basilides, promises that she will intercede for him when she comes into the presence of the Lord.<sup>13</sup> "Cornelius and Cyprian, both awaiting martyrdom, undertook to help one another unceasingly by their prayers, even if one of them should be called to God,"<sup>14</sup> and the Bishop of Carthage, exhorting virgins to perse-

<sup>9</sup> *Martyrium Polycarpi*, xvii, 2 (ed. Funk, *Opera patrum apostolicorum*, Vol. I, p. 282, Tübingen, 1901, re-edited by Bihlmeyer, 1924).

<sup>10</sup> Numerous texts collected in Delehaye, *op. cit.*, pp. 102 *et seq.*

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 107.

<sup>12</sup> *Exhort. ad Martyr.*, xxxvii.

<sup>13</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, v. Cf. Bk. III, p. 754.

<sup>14</sup> Cyprian, *Epist.*, lx, 5.

verance, begged them<sup>15</sup> not to forget him when they entered into glory.”<sup>16</sup>

It is not at all surprising that the invocation of the martyrs should have grown, and that it should have been practised especially at their tombs. We have already mentioned<sup>17</sup> what fervour surrounded the memories of St. Peter and St. Paul at St. Sebastian. This is a special instance, which the unique place held by the two apostles in the history of the Roman Church brings into prominence. But everywhere the tombs of the martyrs became the centres of pious exercises. A cultus, discreet indeed so long as persecutions or threats of persecution continued, began thus to be organised near the remains of the martyrs.<sup>18</sup> The cemeteries, and especially in times which were still difficult, the hidden cemeteries—in other words, the Catacombs—became after the great massacres the natural places for religious assemblies and for worship.

## § 2. CHRISTIAN LIFE IN THE CATACOMBS

### *Place of the Catacombs in Christian Life*

The precarious situation of the Church which continued down to the beginning of the fourth century made it necessary, in spite of the growing toleration which preceded its legal recognition, not to advertise too much its increasing hold upon the world which it was gradually conquering. Though in Rome there were already several churches, these remained almost wholly confined in an outer zone;<sup>1</sup> and the “headquarters” of the Roman community, the centre of the ecclesiastical administration, seems to have remained in the suburbs throughout the third century.<sup>2</sup> From the region situated between the

<sup>15</sup> Delehay, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

<sup>16</sup> *De habitu virginum*, iv.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Bk. I, p. 291.

<sup>18</sup> At the moment when Pionius was arrested during the Decian persecution, he was celebrating, with the church of Smyrna, the anniversary of the martyrdom of Polycarp.

<sup>1</sup> It must be added that this outer zone was possibly not the least populated, for the central quarters grouped around the Field of Mars comprised a greater proportion of public buildings and reserved spaces.

<sup>2</sup> Some have wondered whether, before the installing of the seat of the Roman episcopal curia in the Lateran under Constantine, this had not been for a while established near the site of the present church of St. Laurence in *Damaso*. De Rossi (*De origine, historia, indicibus scrinii et bibliothecæ sedis apostolicæ*, preface to Vol. I of the *Bibliotheca apostolica Vaticana: Codices latini*, Rome, 1886)

Via Nomentana and the Via Salaria it had passed to the Appian Way. But it was always in the Catacombs that the heart of the Church was to be found—either in the Ostrian cemetery, or that of Priscilla, or that of Callistus, situated close to that of St. Sebastian.

*The Development of the Roman Catacombs in the Third Century*

From the second half of the second century until the end of the third, these underwent a very great development. At the beginning of this period, Callistus, still a deacon, enlarged the crypts of Lucina on the Appian Way, and formed the great cemetery which became *par excellence* that of the Roman community, which owed its ownership to the liberality of a great family, possibly the Cæcili. It continued to be known by the name of Callistus, although he himself was not buried there.<sup>3</sup> Off the same Appian Way there came into existence the catacomb of Prætextatus, the *Cæmeterium Majus*, an extension perhaps of the Ostrianum, on the Via Nomentana, and the Catacomb of Calepodius on the Via Aurelia, in which Callistus was interred. In the course of the third century, new increases accompanied the growth of Roman Christianity, which may have amounted to some fifty thousand souls about the middle of this period. At that time we find the cemeteries of Pamphilus, Maximus, Trason, that of the Giordiani on the Via Salaria, those of St. Hippolytus and St. Laurence on the Via Tiburtina, that called “inter duas lauros” on the Via Labicana, the cemetery “ad Catacumbas”<sup>4</sup> known later on as that of St. Sebastian on the Appian Way, and that of Pontian on the Via Portuensis. The ownership of these cemeteries, most of which were possessed at first by private individuals, gradually passed to the Church, which probably possessed them all at the beginning of the fourth century, as may be inferred from the arrangements of places adapted for worship, and the erection there of basilicas once the persecutions had ceased.

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thought he had proved that the pontifical archives were in this place though the centre of administration was transferred to the Lateran, and he inferred from this that in a previous period this centre had likewise been at St. Laurence. But the establishment of the archives in this place has not in fact been proved conclusively. Cf. L. Duchesne, *Note sur la topographie de Rome au moyen âge*: II. *Les titres presbyteraux et les diaconies*, in *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire*, published by the French School in Rome, Vol. VII, 1887, p. 217, n. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 1128.

<sup>4</sup> On the origin of the name, cf. Bk. II, p. 521.

*Catacombs in the Various Provinces*

The same certainly was true also of other cities. The Catacombs of Naples, Tuscany, Sicily, the province of Africa, Alexandria or Asia Minor became sooner or later the property of the Church, like those of Rome. We should perhaps add to this ecclesiastical property some burial crypts such as those of St. Victor at Marseilles, or in the city of Sopianæ in Pannonia (now Pecs, in Hungary).<sup>5</sup>

*Christian Worship in the Catacombs*

The change brought about in the juridical status of these great properties involved certain material consequences. The heads of the ecclesiastical communities, henceforth free to administer them as they desired, took the necessary steps to organise religious life there, either below the ground or on the surface, but always in contact with these subterranean cities, which in certain circumstances and especially in times of persecution, would become its chief centre. Thus Pope Fabian instituted in the cemetery of Callistus and other Roman cemeteries various edifices, oratories and places of assembly, usually arranged close to the most important entrances to these catacombs. On the other hand, the substitution of corporate possession by the Church for that of the former private owners exposed these ecclesiastical lands still more to attacks by the civil authorities when hostilities were reopened. We must remark again<sup>6</sup> that this does not imply that the civil authorities had the cemeteries systematically profaned, for respect towards burial places would prevent this. But emperors like Decius and Valerian prohibited entry into the cemeteries, and confiscated the religious edifices which had been erected there. The Christians were themselves liable to be arrested there, if not massacred on the spot. In this manner were apprehended, in the cemetery of Callistus, Pope Sixtus and the deacons Felicissimus and Agapitus, in the Valerian persecution. It was then that, in order to protect themselves, defend the mystery of their rites, and ward off the violations of tombs which might result, even though not originally intended, from police raids, they made narrow passages and filled in others, bricked up the entrances to sandpits or

<sup>5</sup> Cf. J. Zeiller, *Les origines chrétiennes dans les provinces danubiennes de l'Empire romain*, Paris, 1918, pp. 191 et seq., and E. Dyggve, *Das Mausoleum in Pecs, in Pannonia-Konyvtar*, 3, Pecs, 1933.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Bk. I, pp. 291-293.



*arenarii*, which had sometimes been used as outlets, and destroyed main stairways, so as temporarily to sever communications between them and a hostile world. Such a state of things could not last, but the material traces of these arrangements for a time of danger have remained visible down to our own time.

### § 3. THE CATACOMBS AND CHRISTIAN ART

#### *Paintings in the Catacombs*

The increased use of the Catacombs, both as places of refuge and as places for liturgical assembly and also as the centres for the growing cultus of the martyrs, could not fail to link them more closely with the faithful. Accordingly, it is not surprising that the faithful were constantly moved by the desire to add to and improve their ornamentation. Paintings continued to develop there from the end of the second century down to the last persecution.

#### *Symbolism*

Many of these display the same characteristics as those of the preceding period. The symbolism which appeared in the second half of the second century, permitting the representation of the subjects of the Christian Faith while retaining a certain air of mystery, continued. The Lamb is a constant feature everywhere in the paintings of the third century; we also find Orpheus with dog and goat at his feet, and at his side two doves perched on a tree, figuring Christ drawing the hearts of all. This is on a vault in the cemetery of St. Callistus, and belongs to this period. The protests of Tertullian against the image of the Good Shepherd symbolising the divine mercy, which was displeasing to his rigoristic mind, suffice to show its diffusion. The *Orans*, the dove, the fish, the anchor, the crown which recalls a text of St. Paul,<sup>1</sup> the horse finishing its race, which recalls another,<sup>2</sup> similarly express, in inscriptions graven in marble on the walls of the catacombs and in the frescoes which decorate them, the immortal hopes of Christians. One of the most curious allegorical paintings appears on the panels of the vestibule of the

<sup>1</sup> "Every one that striveth for the mastery, refraineth himself . . . and they indeed that they may receive a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible one" (I Cor., ix, 25).

<sup>2</sup> "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course" (II Tim., iv, 7).

upper Catacomb of St. Januarius at Naples: three young girls are building a tower, in accordance with the allegory of the *Pastor* of Hermas,<sup>3</sup> in which the writer says he beheld twelve virgins building a tower, symbolising the Church, with stones taken from the waters, symbolising the faithful regenerated by the waters of baptism.<sup>4</sup>

Developing the ideas of the traditional teaching, we find Biblical episodes, and more rarely perhaps, evangelical and sacramental illustrations on the vaultings or the walls, such as the tree and serpent of the earthly paradise in the cemetery of Priscilla, the sacrifice of Abraham in that of Domitilla, the adoration of the Magi in the Capella Græca, and also in the cemetery of Priscilla, as well as in that of SS. Peter and Marcellinus, and the Eucharistic banquet in the cemetery of Callistus.<sup>5</sup>

### *Tendency towards Realism*

Side by side with this ornamental cycle so characteristic of primitive Christian art and so closely connected with the hidden life of the catacombs, we find some new conceptions which are antithetical up to a point, and related perhaps with the other aspect of Christian life, now more closely mingled with the world by reason of the progress of Christian propaganda outside the times of persecution. These are characterised by a certain realism. "Gradually the paintings become bolder, and in place of an *Orans* vague in form, the features are individualised, and thus we get a revival of the taste for portraiture so dear to the Romans. The nose, the mouth, the face are not depicted in a haphazard way; they depict, without any doubt, the proper physiognomy of the deceased, in the medium of marble or brick; the clothing or hair depict the social position."<sup>6</sup> Thus, in the cemetery of St. Soter, in the midst of a paradise in which the peacocks drinking from goblets show the continuance of the symbolical tradition, we find two and also three *orantes* which are certainly not purely symbolical, for each one has a name written above the head.<sup>7</sup> A consecrated virgin figures as an *Orans* in the cemetery

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Bk. II, pp. 447 *et seq.*

<sup>4</sup> R. Garrucci, *Storia dell' arte cristiana nei primi otto secoli della Chiesa*, 6 vol., Prato, 1872-1880, Vol. II, pl. xciv.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. J. Wilpert, *Die Malereien der Katakomben Roms*, pl. xli, 3.

<sup>6</sup> H. Chéramy, *Les catacombes romaines*, Paris, 1932, pp. 70-71.

<sup>7</sup> A. Perate, *L'archéologie chrétienne*, Paris, 1892, p. 115, fig. 72.

of Priscilla, but the veil covering her head expresses in a precise way what she had been on earth.<sup>8</sup> In a fresco in the cemetery of Domitilla, the martyr Petronilla introduces into heaven the soul of a Christian lady represented as an *Orans*, while the inscribed name, *Veneranda*, testifies to her individuality.<sup>9</sup>

A certain number of figured monuments, moreover, show us the great veneration which characterised the memory of the martyrs, but there are no mural paintings of this nature belonging to the third century. The portrait of St. Agnes, always depicted as an *Orans*, but clothed in the vesture of a young Patrician girl, is found on the base of several cups,<sup>10</sup> and glass vessels or lamps depict the portraits of Christians condemned to the mines or delivered up to beasts in the amphitheatre.<sup>11</sup>

### *Christian Art in the East*

The tendency manifested, though still with a certain reserve, in the paintings of the Roman catacombs, is also found, but even more clearly, at the same time in the eastern extreme of the Empire. The painters who worked in the Christian chapel of Dura-Europos introduced there, besides Adam and Eve, Moses, the Good Shepherd and his flock, certain subjects such as Jesus walking in the waters, or the holy women at the Tomb, which do not seem to have been treated at Rome during the same time. The realism and truthful aim which distinguish these works is perhaps in greater contrast to the symbolism of primitive painting in the West. Even so, the types retain a conventional character in some respects. It seems indeed that the Dura paintings are inspired by conventions which prevailed later on in eastern iconography, and which at the commencement manifested not only the inevitable influence of the pagan models which the first Christians had before their eyes, but also more unexpected Jewish influence, at least in the matter of scenes from the Old Testament. In spite of the prohibitions of the Law concerning the representation of the human form, the Jews had employed artists to decorate their *hypogea* and even their synagogues, as we see

<sup>8</sup> J. Wilpert, *Die Malereien der Katakomben Roms*, pl. lxxx.

<sup>9</sup> *Bullettino di Archeologia cristiana*, Vol. XIII, 1875, pl. I.

<sup>10</sup> R. Garrucci, *op. cit.*, pl. cxc and cxc.

<sup>11</sup> *Bullettino di Archeologia cristiana*, Vol. XIII, 1875, pl. I.

from the Jewish necropolises of Carthage and Rome,<sup>12</sup> and one of the most remarkable discoveries found at Dura was that of a synagogue embellished with paintings illustrating biblical incidents and especially the story of Moses and the Exodus.<sup>13</sup> There does not seem much room for doubt that the decoration of the synagogue influenced that of the Christian chapel at Dura.

### *The Special Characteristics of the Early Christian Paintings*

The influences to which primitive Christian art was thus subject, and which it could hardly avoid, did not prevent it from having from the first its own features which gave it a character of its own from the start. Though it made use of pagan motives as an element of decoration, it remained an essentially chaste art, and it banished all voluptuous elements. As a symbolical art, it had for initiates the value of a secret language. "Being closely linked with the religious life from which it proceeded and which it tried to express, in the third century it had, by choosing its figures and scenes, already succeeded in constructing a veritable system of religious iconography."<sup>14</sup>

### *The Christian Sarcophagi*

Sculpture had its place side by side with painting. Sarcophagi, whether deposited in the catacombs or in cemeteries in the open air, were decorated with bas-reliefs which from the third century onwards likewise display a specifically Christian character. Symbolism here is at least equally prominent. The Good Shepherd carrying his sheep on his shoulders is a subject more frequently treated perhaps on the sides of sarcophagi than on the vaultings of the catacombs. Doubtless there was an especial desire to recall this sign of forgive-

<sup>12</sup> Cf. O. Marucchi, *La catacombe romane*, ed. 1902, pp. 234, 247, and R. Cagnat and P. Gauchler, *Les monuments antiques de la Tunisie*, Paris, 1898, Vol. I, pp. 151 et seq.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. F. Cumont, *La synagogue de Doura et ses peintures*, in *Byzantion*, Vol. VIII, 1933, pp. 373 et seq.; Clark Hopkins and Du Mesnil du Buisson, *La synagogue de Doura et ses peintures*, i: *Comptes-rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres*, 1933, pp. 243 et seq.; Du Mesnil du Buisson, *La synagogue de Doura-Europos et ses peintures*, in *Revue Biblique*, Vol. XLIII, 1934, pp. 105 et seq.

<sup>14</sup> L. Bréhier, *L'art chrétien, Son développement iconographique des origines à nos jours*, 2nd edn., Paris, 1928, p. 2.

ness and tenderness in an age which comprised so many *lapsi* besides martyrs and confessors. The sarcophagi on which, as on that of La Gayolle in Gaul,<sup>15</sup> the Good Shepherd, facing the *Orans*, seems to revive hope in sinful souls, was a lively protest against the intransigent severity of a Tertullian or a Novatian, so pitiless towards human weaknesses.

Another figure recurs with significant frequency in the decoration of sarcophagi of this period, that of St. Peter. It is found much more often than that of St. Paul. From the beginning of the third century, the iconographic themes concerning the Prince of the Apostles are almost as manifold as the Christological themes. One of the earliest joins the figure of the Apostle with the miraculous spring in the desert and the baptism of the centurion Cornelius. Like his Master, Peter more than once carries a sheep on his shoulders, surrounded by other shepherds, symbolising his brethren in the episcopate. In other cases, again, he holds the keys, the figure of his spiritual power, or again he is depicted on his way to the martyrdom which terminated his life at Rome. The iconographic "cycle" of Peter is evidently an especially Roman cycle. We can recognise other apostolic cycles, more weakly represented, such as those of St. Paul and St. Thomas. There are also numerous sacramental representations, usually that of Baptism, depicted for instance in the form of the baptism of the Ethiopian instructed by the deacon Philip,<sup>16</sup> or that of the Eucharistic banquet, as found on an Isaurian sarcophagus.<sup>17</sup>

Thus, we find, with an undeniable unity of religious inspiration, the same variety of themes in primitive Christian sculpture as in painting. These themes are not exclusively Roman like that of St. Peter, and the art of the sarcophagi is developed not only in Rome. The sarcophagi in southern Gaul, such as that of La Gayolle in the Var district, which is one of the earliest, and those of Arles are well-known examples. It is possible that the workshops of Arles were merely branches of those in Rome.

### *The Sources Inspiring Primitive Christian Art*

The part which should be attributed to Rome in the history of primitive Christian art, which some regard as absolutely preponder-

<sup>15</sup> L. Le Blant, *Les sarcophages chrétiens de la Gaule*, Paris, 1886, pl. lix.

<sup>16</sup> On all this, see J. Wilpert, *I sarcofagi cristiani antichi*, Vol. I, pp. 1 et seq.

<sup>17</sup> W. Ramsay, *Studies in the History and Art of the Eastern Provinces of the Roman Empire*, London, 1906, p. 6 and pl. 1.

ant,<sup>18</sup> remains nevertheless the subject of controversy. The most recent discoveries, such as those of Christian monuments in various regions of the East, certainly seem to show that Christian art had no single origin, whether Roman or Eastern. Rather, it was in each region a reflection of local conditions. The graphic or sculptural iconography of the Roman catacombs which is elaborated in the course of the second century is indeed Roman. When it turns to the representation of biblical or evangelical scenes, it remains symbolical. We must not regard it as a mere illustration of the Old or New Testaments; it is more apologetical than historical in character. At Alexandria, and in Asia Minor and Syria, where the earliest productions of Christian art known to us range according to locality from the second half of the second century to the first half of the third, other preoccupations appear. The Syrian artists seek to reproduce the earthly appearance of personages who are the object of the veneration of the faithful. It is this realistic tendency which, as we have said, is to be noted at Dura, but it is found also in Rome in the third century, with a return to the art of portraiture.<sup>19</sup>

It remains true nevertheless that, viewed from the standpoint of the general history of art, the art of the paintings in the catacombs or of the bas reliefs on the sarcophagi in the first centuries is but "the supreme flowering of Hellenistic art." It is to the Alexandrian tradition that it owes its decorative freshness, which so much resembles that of Pompeii. It is also from the same source that it derives its truly decorative character, and also the somewhat childish idea of symmetry, which so rapidly becomes the rule in religious iconography. What is to be admired is that, with materials which were so banal and which had, so to speak, become public property, Christian artists were able, thanks to the ardour of their faith and the subtlety of their symbolism, to create an art which is really new in its spirit. It is rather difficult in the present state of knowledge to say which were the centres where this creation took place; the communications between the Christian communities in the Roman world were, moreover, sufficiently frequent to ensure that a practice adopted by one church would be transmitted rapidly to others.

"The cosmopolitan character at this time of Hellenistic art, of

<sup>18</sup> E.g. Mgr. Wilpert, in the matter of sarcophagi.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. W. Elliger, *Zur Entstehung und früher Entwicklung der altchristlichen Bildkunst*, in *Studien über christliche Denkmäler*, herausgegeben von J. Ficker, *Neue Folge der archäologischen Studien zum christlichen Altertum und Mittelalter*, Heft 23, Leipzig, 1934.

which Christian art is but a manifestation, prevents us from attributing its creation to one centre rather than another. Those who defend its Roman origin seek support in chronology: the figures of the *Orans* and the Good Shepherd appear in the Roman cemeteries at the end of the first or the beginning of the second century, which would seem to indicate that these themes are of Roman origin. The majority of the Eastern monuments are, it is true, later in date.”<sup>20</sup> But these Roman representations should perhaps themselves be dated about half a century later. Now, already in the second century there were at Alexandria catacombs decorated with paintings similar to those of Rome, and, “when we bear in mind the attraction which the Hellenistic East exercised on the Romans in the days of the Empire, we find it difficult to believe that the position was reversed in the one realm of Christian art. It was the Jews or Judaizing Christians of Syria or Alexandria who carried to Rome the Old Testament *motifs* such as those of Daniel among the lions or Noe in the Ark, and . . . a symbol like that of the fish certainly bears the mark of the East and even of Alexandria.”<sup>21</sup> It has even been noticed that there are some resemblances between Christian art and the old Egyptian symbolism which cannot be due to chance. Like the burial art of the Pharaohs, Christian art was, in the first two centuries of its history, a system of symbols forming for the initiated a complete language. In this way it became a form of religious teaching: “from the beginning, beauty was for Christian artists only a means of giving more striking expression to the idea.”<sup>22</sup>

But, viewed as a testimony to the life itself of the Christians of the first ages, this art, so simple, or even so limited in its methods of expression, takes on a new value and a more stirring meaning when we remember that it was, especially in the case of the art of the catacombs, the work of men who were trying in this way to translate the truths of the faith into the language of beauty, very often in presence of death or at least of danger, in places far from the light, in which the world's hatred or incomprehension compelled them sometimes to hide themselves, and where they nevertheless carried on their work of teaching their brethren and rendering the homage of filial love to God by executing these works of art, inspired by a complete sincerity.

<sup>20</sup> L. Bréhier, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

THE LAST OF THE PERSECUTIONS<sup>1</sup>§ I. EVENTS PRECEDING THE FINAL  
PERSECUTIONS*The Hostility of Galerius*

THE period of understanding and harmony between the Church and the Empire which began in the reign of Gallienus and had continued under that of Diocletian once more came to an end. From 293 the Empire was governed by an Imperial Council of four. Diocletian had already in 286 co-opted as Augustus Maximian Hercules, who had been made Cæsar the preceding year; in 292 he had made two Cæsars, lieutenants and future successors of the two Augusti, Constantius Chlorus and Galerius. It was five years after this transformation of the imperial regime that the situation of Christians in the Empire began once more to be altered. The first manifestations of a change in the attitude of the imperial authorities took place on the morrow of the great victory obtained by Galerius over the Persians in 297 after a first reverse,<sup>2</sup> and may not have been

<sup>1</sup> Bibliography.—The same general bibliography as for chs. viii and ix. The special bibliography is for the most part contained in the notes to the present chapter. But see also: E. Stein, *Geschichte des spätrömischen Reichs*, Vol. I (284-476); *Vom römischen zum byzantinischen Staate*, Vienna, 1928; G. Costa, *Diocleziano* (Profili, 50), Rome, 1920; *Diocleziano*, in the *Dizionario Epigraphico di antichità romane* of E. de Ruggiero, Rome, 1895; O. Hunziker, *Zur Regierung und Christenverfolgung des Kaisers Diocletianus und seiner Nachfolger*, Vol. II, 2nd part of *Untersuchungen zur römischen Kaisergeschichte* herausgegeben von Max Büdinger, Leipzig, 1868; A. J. Mason, *The Persecution of Diocletian*, *A Historical Essay*, Cambridge, 1876; H. Florian, *Untersuchungen zur Diokletianischen Verfolgung*, Giessen, 1928; T. de Bacci-Venuti, *Dalla grande persecuzione al trionfo del Cristianesimo*, Milan, 1913; G. Pedrotti, *Storia di Costanzo Cloro*, Girgenti, 1904; L. Cantarelli, *Per so storia dell' imperatore Costanzo Cloro*, in *Atti della Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia, Memorie*, Vol. I, Part 1: *Miscellanea De Rossi*, Part I, Rome, 1923; R. Andreotti, *Costanzo Cloro*, in *Didaskalion*, 1930, fasc. 1, pp. 156 *et seq.*; F. Goerres, *Die Religionspolitik des Kaisers Constantius*, in *Zeitschrift für wissenschaftliche Theologie*, XXXI, 1888, p. 75; K. Bihlmeyer, *Der Toleranzedikt des Galerius*, in *Tübingsche Theologische Quartalschrift*, XCIV, 1912, pp. 411 *et seq.*; J. Maurice, *Numismatique constantinienne*, 2 vols., Paris, 1908 and 1911.

<sup>2</sup> There are martyrs sometimes attributed to the early years of the reign of Diocletian, but their date is in reality most uncertain.



unconnected with it. The situation of the Cæsar of the East was greatly improved by this resounding success. He was the better able to carry out his personal preferences, and these were certainly not favourable to the Christians. His mother was from across the Danube, according to Lactantius,<sup>3</sup> who calls her a "mulier admodum superstitiosa," a zealous worshipper, if not a priestess of the deities of the mountains, "deorum montium cultrix." Galerius had inherited her fanaticism, and doubtless it was shared also by the majority of his army, the most important contingents of which had been provided by the Danubian peasants. Did his mother's influence, and the pressure of a body of officers desiring, perhaps both for the sake of advancement and because of Roman patriotism, to remove an element suspected of lukewarmness towards existing institutions, lead Galerius "to present himself to the pagan majority of the whole Empire and to military opinion as the champion of the official religion"?<sup>4</sup> At any rate, the new measures against Christians seem to have begun with the return from the Persian expedition, or at least shortly afterwards. And very soon there was a systematic purge, the principal agent in which was a general officer, Veturius, the *Magister militum* of Galerius.<sup>5</sup>

### *The Christians and the Rite of "Adoration"*

It has been suggested<sup>6</sup> that the occasion of these measures was Diocletian's introduction of the rite of adoration into the court ceremonial, copied from the etiquette of the Persian Court. This meant that personages of a certain position, and officers above subaltern rank admitted to the imperial audience, before taking possession of their offices, had to "adore" the emperor. It is suggested that Christians refused to do so, and that accordingly proceedings were taken against them. But there is nothing in the actual facts which supports this notion:<sup>7</sup> the "adoratio," the institution of which

<sup>3</sup> *De mortibus persecutorum*, ix.

<sup>4</sup> H. Gregoire, *La "conversion" de Constantin*, in *Revue de l'Université de Bruxelles*, Vol. XXXVI, 1930-1931, p. 238.

<sup>5</sup> Eusebius, *Chronicle*. The date indicated varies according to the MSS. from the 14th to the 17th year of Diocletian, i.e. from 298 to 301.

<sup>6</sup> E. Babut, *L'adoration des empereurs et l'origine de la persécution de Diocletien*, in *Revue historique*, Vol. CCXIII, 1916, pp. 222 et seq.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. H. Delehaye, *La persécution dans l'armée sous Diocletien*, in *Bulletin de l'Académie royale de Belgique, Classe des Lettres*, 1921, pp. 150 et seq.

is thus attributed to Diocletian,<sup>8</sup> and which was called in Greek *προσκύνησις*, was only a genuflexion, which we find later on in use in the palaces of the Christian emperors. It is not possible to quote any authentic example of a Christian officer suffering for his refusal to submit to it.

### *The Purge of the Army*

It was indeed because no more Christians were desired in the Army, where they were regarded as already too numerous, that the decisions were taken of which Veturius was the instrument. Eusebius tells us that "he left to Christian soldiers the choice of retaining their honours and grades by obeying the imperial orders, or if they refused, of being excluded from the army."<sup>9</sup> Such exclusion involved for officers, who were especially aimed at, degradation from their rank, "*gradus dejectio*," and for ordinary soldiers, who, as we gather from *Passions* worthy of credence, were also affected by these severe measures, ignominious dismissal, "*ignominiosa missio*," with deprivation of the title and privileges of veterans.

Eusebius's account gives us to understand that many Christians were thus removed. In some places, through excessive zeal, attempts were made to compel soldiers ready to renounce their position to offer sacrifice, and in circumstances which are not known to us there were some executions; those of Pasocrates and Valention, Hesychius, Marcianus and Nicander, and of the veteran Julius in Mœsia are vouched for by documents apparently reliable.<sup>10</sup> All these martyrs belonged to the army of the Danube, placed under the authority of Galerius.

It is not surprising that Christians encountered there more numerous and more resolute opponents than elsewhere. But is it possible to believe that the military purge was confined to the troops of Galerius and was not general? The texts themselves do not enlighten us on this subject. But it seems impossible *a priori* that the

<sup>8</sup> Moreover, a recent study by A. Alföldi (*Die Ausgestaltung des monarchischen Zeremoniellen am römischen Kaiserhofe*, in *Römische Mitteilungen*, Vol. LXIX, 1934, pp. 1 et seq.) has shown the somewhat legendary character of the early testimonies attributing to Diocletian a revolution of the Court ceremonial based on a systematic imitation of oriental monarchies.

<sup>9</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VIII, iv, 3.

<sup>10</sup> Ruinart, *Acta martyrum sincera*, pp. 616 et seq. On this group of martyrs, cf. J. Zeiller, *Les origines chrétiennes dans les provinces danubiennes de l'Empire romain*, pp. 55-59.

Cæsar should have inaugurated a policy pregnant with consequences without the ratification of the Emperor which made it applicable to the whole Empire. On the other hand, the unquestionable ascendancy of Galerius which followed his Persian victory and was destined to increase, while the will power of Diocletian, an old and sick man, diminished, might explain an initiative which the latter may have allowed his Cæsar to take in his own forces without immediately making it also his own.

### *The Causes of the Persecution*

It has indeed been urged <sup>11</sup> that Diocletian's policy had been fundamentally anti-Christian from the first, and that the Emperor had delayed to declare himself only for lack of opportunity. According to this view, the antinomy between Church and Empire was practically self-evident for him, and only the necessity to take up first of all more urgent tasks involved in the external defence and internal reorganisation of the Empire led to the adjournment of an offensive which was nevertheless inevitable against Christianity as an ever more redoubtable spiritual enemy of the Roman State. Doubtless a few cases can be cited of military insubordination due to conscientious objections, denoting here and there a state of mind on the part of Christians rather unfavourable towards the Roman power, but these are of uncertain date. The conscript Maximilian <sup>12</sup> and the centurion Marcellus <sup>13</sup> were put to death, the first at Theveste (Tebessa) for refusing to be enrolled, and the second at Tangiers for refusing to continue to serve, and perhaps also the veteran Tipasius, who may have been condemned by Maximian Hercules for refusing service when veterans were recalled for an expedition against the Moors.<sup>14</sup> But these were only isolated cases, and their refusals astonished their superiors. Even so, they would paradoxically but prematurely be in conformity with the desire of

<sup>11</sup> K. Stade, *Der Politiker Diokletian und die letzte grosse Christenverfolgung*, Inaugural-Dissertation der Universität Frankfurt-am-Main, Baden, 1926.

<sup>12</sup> *Acta Maximiliani* (Ruinart, *Acta sincera*, p. 309).

<sup>13</sup> *Acta S. Marcelli centurionis* (ed. H. Delehay), *Les Actes de saint Marcel le Centurion*, in *Analecta Bollandiana*, Vol. XLI, 1923, pp. 257 et seq.

<sup>14</sup> We have some hesitation in using the *Passion* of Tipasius, as it has so many legendary elements. Cf. P. Monceaux, *Etude critique sur la Passio Tipasii*, in *Revue Archéologique*, 4th series, Vol. IV, 1904, pp. 267 et seq. He regards as historically true the part we summarise above. The text of the *Passion* is in *Analecta Bollandiana*, Vol. IX, 1890, pp. 116 et seq.

the Emperors to have no more Christians in the Army. We find also in Christian authors such as Commodian, Arnobius and Lactantius some apocalyptic ideas connected with the vision of a rather dark future for Rome, or otherwise calculated to offend Roman patriotism. But we must bear in mind that the date of Commodian remains uncertain, and that the diatribes of Lactantius against the pagan Empire were written only in the bitter days of persecution or in the exaltation of their glorious sequel.<sup>15</sup> There is, in fine, no proof that Diocletian or his colleagues and counsellors had any serious occasion to take alarm because of a growing anti-Roman attitude during his reign. The peaceful description given by Eusebius of the first fifteen years of this reign give us a directly contrary impression.

### *Christianity and Manichæism*

We know, indeed, that Diocletian was greatly worried about Manichæism, which he proscribed and condemned with extreme severity, and it is possible that he may have thought there was some connection between Manichæism and Christianity. The recent discoveries in Egypt of primitive Manichæan writings show plainly, though they have not yet all been published,<sup>16</sup> that Manichæism did indeed present itself as a synthesis of Christianity, the religion of the West, and the Eastern religions of Iran and India. The Edict of Diocletian which attached severe penalties to Manichæism probably belongs to the year 296.<sup>17</sup> The first symptoms of a new persecution against Christianity were manifested shortly afterwards.

<sup>15</sup> The *De mortibus persecutorum* celebrates the Church's victory over the tyrants who tried to destroy her. The *Institutiones* are a philosophical treatise, written between 302 and 308. It is undeniable that we find there some passages very severe in regard to the Roman power, declarations concerning the incompatibility of military service with the profession of Christianity, and an affirmation that the Empire will one day leave Rome and return to Asia. But this political catastrophe is presented as the preliminary to the end of the world and the destruction of the universal order of which Rome was the guardian, while in the *De mortibus* we find the author constituting himself the champion of the Roman idea against the barbarian emperors.

<sup>16</sup> C. Schmidt, *Neue Originalquellen des Manichäismus*, Stuttgart, 1933. Cf. also *supra*, p. 1009.

<sup>17</sup> Edict *De maleficiis et Manichæis*, in Gregorian Code, XIV, 4. On the date, cf. Tillemont, *Histoire des Empereurs*, Vol. IV, p. 35, and A. Neander, *Allgemeine Geschichte der christlichen Religion und Kirche* (8 vols., Hamburg, 1825-1852), Vol. II, p. 195.

Even so, it was not possible to confuse the two religions, even by attributing to Christianity certain political or socially subversive tendencies which in reality were found only in individuals. Such a confusion in Diocletian's mind is difficult to reconcile with the benevolence which he in fact displayed towards Christians for so long. It is, of course, possible that he may have undergone a sudden change in their regard, caused by his equally sudden discovery of the danger of Manichæism. But in that case the brutal and general persecution ought to have broken out immediately, which it did not do.

### *Galerius the Chief Author of the Persecution*

To sum up, the account of Lactantius, which makes Galerius the real beginner and the chief agent of the persecution, is very likely in conformity with the facts. Lactantius had long lived in Nicomedia, had taught the eldest son of Constantine and hence was obviously familiar with the imperial household, and in consequence may be regarded as a well-informed witness.

As, moreover, he was not very tenderly disposed towards Diocletian, why should he have accused Galerius especially, if the latter did not really play a very prominent part in starting the persecution? Again, the circumstances of Diocletian's abdication, which followed so soon afterwards, lead to the same conclusion. Lactantius has given a dramatic account of it, very obviously embroidered with imaginary details, in which the aged and wavering Diocletian is persuaded by Galerius to give the decision removing the power from himself. At least we gather that Galerius influenced the hesitating will of the Augustus, already inclined to surrender his power, in order to obtain, together with this surrender, the revocation of the original arrangements designating, as a new Cæsar and therefore one of his future successors, the young Constantine, son of Constantius Chlorus. The historic truth, so far as we can derive it from these various testimonies, seems to be that Diocletian became a persecutor and, contrary to all his previous policy, reintroduced religious warfare into the Empire, under the direct and preponderating influence of Galerius.

Even so, while Galerius may be justly regarded as the chief author of the persecution, he was not the only instigator of it. He once more declared war upon the Church, but this was because, at least in some

quarters in the Empire, the spirit of war had not been exorcised, or else had reawakened. The philosopher Porphyry about 270 or 280 had written a very virulent work against Christianity in fifteen books, *Κατὰ χριστιανῶν λόγος*.<sup>18</sup> His disciple Hierocles, who was governor of Bithynia, was no better disposed towards Christians, and in 303 he addressed to them a pamphlet<sup>19</sup> entitled *The Friend of the Truth*, which was probably not without its influence on Diocletian himself. Still another philosopher, whom Lactantius mentions without naming,<sup>20</sup> and whom he depicts as a veritable hypocrite, published a new diatribe about the same time. These two works were indeed published after the first persecuting measures, but they indicated a state of mind which had helped to provoke them.

### *The Occasion of the Persecution*

In these conditions, there was needed only an occasion for the renewal of the struggle, which had nevertheless so many times failed to achieve the desired end. If we are to believe Lactantius,<sup>21</sup> this occasion was an incident which occurred at Antioch in 302. When Diocletian had offered a sacrifice, and the entrails of the victims were being examined, the expected signs failed to appear. The head of the augurers, Tagis, thereupon declared that the Christians in the escort had upset the operations through making the sign of the Cross. Diocletian, alarmed and angry, began by commanding all the palace servants to offer sacrifice, under pain of flagellation. Then, led on by this first act and by superstitious fears, he personally adopted the policy which Galerius had already urged upon him. He sent to the heads of the forces of Asia, who depended directly upon himself, an order to put before the officers and men the choice between offering sacrifice or dismissal from the army.

<sup>18</sup> The *Κατὰ χριστιανῶν λόγος* is lost. It has been partly reconstituted. Harnack has published the fragments this combined in the *Abhandlungen* of the Berlin Academy, 1916, under the title *Porphyry "Gegen die Christen"* 15 *Bücher. Zeugnisse, Fragmente und Referata*. Cf. P. de Labriolle, *La réaction païenne*, Paris, 1934, pp. 223 *et seq.*, and Vol. III, p. 729.

<sup>19</sup> The *Θεοφιλέης*, the correct title of which should be *Λόγος φιλαλήθης*, *Friendly Discourse on the Truth*, was known to Lactantius, *Divinæ Institutiones*, v, 11, 12, and Eusebius, *Contra Hieroclen*. Cf. P. de Labriolle, *op. cit.*, pp. 306 *et seq.*

<sup>20</sup> Lactantius, *Divinæ Institut.*, v, 2. Cf. P. de Labriolle, *op. cit.*, pp. 304-306.

<sup>21</sup> *De mortibus persecutorum*, x.

It is possible that the military persecution was prevalent also in the army of Maximian Hercules. But no certain instance can be produced: the supposed massacre of a whole legion of soldiers said incidentally to have come from the East, the Thebeian Legion, in the Valais, is legendary.<sup>22</sup> The *Acts of St. Sebastian*, the martyred Roman officer, although not possessing a much higher historical value, nevertheless authorise us to think that their subject, whose figure has been popularised by Art, was indeed an officer put to death at this time.<sup>23</sup>

## § 2. THE GREAT PERSECUTION. THE EDICTS OF 303 AND 304, AND THEIR APPLICATION

### *The Decision to Persecute*

Things rested there for the moment. But the crisis had arrived. Diocletian, returning to Nicomedia, was joined there by Galerius, who insisted upon war against Christians. Diocletian was still reluctant to shed their blood. A Council, to which were summoned some high officials, civil and military, and in which Hierocles who was present took a prominent part, declared against the Christians.<sup>1</sup> Diocletian wished to consult the oracles once more. He sent to Miletus to question the Didymean Apollo. The oracle, as might have been expected, confirmed the vote of the politicians.<sup>2</sup> The persecution was decided upon.

<sup>22</sup> The existence of a very early cultus excludes any doubt as to the existence of these martyrs of Agaune. But we do not know their number, or whether they were soldiers. For a bibliography on this controverted matter, see *Histoire des Persécutions* by Paul Allard, Vol. IV, pp. 315 *et seq.* in the 2nd edn., and J. P. Kirsch, *Kirchengeschichte*, Vol. I, p. 238, n. 4. Cf. also H. Delehaye, *L'origine du culte des martyrs*, 2nd edn., Brussels, 1933, p. 399.

<sup>23</sup> The existence of the Roman martyr Sebastian is beyond doubt. His *Acts* form part of an artificial compilation, which seems to have no connection with real history. Nevertheless there is no serious reason for rejecting the position of officer which they attribute to Sebastian, or the time of his martyrdom. Cf. A. Dufourcq, *Etude sur les Gesta martyrum romains*, Vol. I, Paris, 1900, pp. 186 *et seq.*

<sup>1</sup> Lactantius, *ibid.*, xi.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* The *Life of Constantine* by Eusebius, parts of which call for caution, but which often gives his personal memories of the Emperor, states (II, 50, 51) that the oracle complained that upright men scattered through the world prevented him from foretelling the future. The resemblance of this detail with the incident of Antioch and the form of the reply may not inspire confidence, but they do not compel us to reject the story entirely.

But Diocletian continued to desire that it should not be a bloody one. An edict was prepared, affecting the buildings and sacred books, and various categories of Christians, but which would not inflict the penalty of death upon any. But without waiting for its publication, on the evening before (24th February 303) the police occupied the church at Nicomedia close to the imperial palace, sacked it, demolished it completely, and burnt the liturgical books.

### *The First Edict (303)*

The Edict was published the following day: it ordered throughout the Empire the destruction of churches and of sacred books, and the deprivation of the faithful of the charges, dignities and privileges which they had possessed. It further deprived all of the right to plead in a court of justice in support of an accusation even of adultery, theft or injury; and lastly Christian slaves could no longer obtain their freedom.<sup>3</sup>

An exasperated Christian of Nicomedia tore down the edict, and was delivered to the flames.<sup>4</sup> The incident had no further official consequences, but shortly afterwards there was a most opportune outbreak of fire in the imperial palace, which enabled Galerius, whom Lactantius accuses formally of causing the fire, to denounce the Christians as incendiaries.<sup>5</sup> The palace servants were put to the torture, except those of Galerius, who were removed by their master. Nothing was found as a result. But a second fire broke out fifteen days after the first, and Galerius ostentatiously left Nicomedia, declaring that he did not wish to be burnt alive.<sup>6</sup> Diocletian by now was beside himself with rage, and regarded as enemies all the Christians in the court and in the city, including his wife Prisca and his daughter Valeria, and presented them with the choice between death and abjuration. The two empresses, who may not yet

<sup>3</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VIII, ii, 4. The last clause given by Eusebius is expressed thus: τοὺς δὲ ἐν οἰκῆσις . . . ἐλευθερίας στρεψίσθαι. The current sense of *oikēria* was that of a domestic slavery. Some writers (cf. Paul Alard, *La persécution de Diocletien*, 2nd edn., Vol. I, p. 160) translate differently: "the people of common condition shall become slaves." But this interpretation seems an arbitrary one.

<sup>4</sup> Lactantius, *De mort. persecut.*, xiii.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* Eusebius (*Hist. eccles.*, VIII, ii, 6) speaks of a chance event. Constantine (*Oratio ad sanctorum cœtum*) attributes the event to lightning. Contemporary history has shown us that a fire which takes place at an opportune moment may be an ingenious way of overcoming political opponents.

<sup>6</sup> Lactantius, *De mort. persecut.*, xiv.



have been formally Christians, defaulted; but there were numerous acts of heroism. Dorotheus, the Great Chamberlain, Peter, attendant of the bedchamber, and others perished in terrible torments.<sup>7</sup> Bishop Anthimus and his clergy were executed, as well as numerous lay-folk, including women and children.<sup>8</sup>

### *Benign Application of the Edict in Gaul and Britain*

The Edict was applied through the Empire, and though it did not immediately bring death upon the refractory, the degree of heroism displayed was by no means equal everywhere to that of the Christians of Nicomedia. In the lands placed under the direct authority of the Cæsar Constantius Chlorus, i.e. Gaul and Britain, the persecution was reduced to a minimum. Constantius Chlorus, like many of his contemporaries, was at least inclined himself towards Monotheism; his first wife, Helena, who was legally only a concubine, may have professed the Christian Faith or was approaching it,<sup>9</sup> and in any case he showed himself to be in favour of toleration. Accordingly, he contented himself with destroying a few churches, in order to conform to the orders of Diocletian.<sup>10</sup>

### *Severity in the Rest of the Empire*

Everywhere else there was much greater severity. In the provinces dependent upon Maximian Hercules, i.e. Italy, Spain and Africa, as in those governed by Galerius and Diocletian himself, the sacred books were destroyed in great numbers. In this way the library and pontifical archives of the Roman Church perished.<sup>11</sup> The same thing happened in many other places, and this explains why only a relatively small number of writings previous to the fourth century, and in particular of authentic Acts of martyrs of the various churches, have come down to us.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, XV; Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VIII, vi.

<sup>8</sup> Lactantius, *ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> According to Theodoret, *Hist. eccles.*, I, 18, Constantine, thanks to his mother, grew up in an already Christian atmosphere. But Eusebius (*Vita Constantini*, III, 47), who was well informed on matters concerning the imperial household, asserts that Helena was converted to Christianity by Constantine. Possibly she had already been favourably disposed towards Christianity for some time, but did not explicitly adhere to it till later.

<sup>10</sup> Lactantius, *ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Cf. J. B. De Rossi, *La biblioteca della Sede apostolica*, in *Studi e documenti di Storia e Diritto*, 1884, pp. 34 *et seq.*

In many places, and notably in Africa, where the application of the Edict was at first especially severe, the cowardice of too many faithless possessors surrendered the artistic or literary treasures of their churches to the civil authorities. These "traditors" were bound to be in disgrace after the return of peace, and the problems which arose concerning them led to a schism, that of the Donatists, which afflicted the African Church for more than a century. But besides veritable "traditors" there were some wary men like Mensurius, Bishop of Carthage, who replaced the sacred books in his basilica by heretical works, which were duly seized by the agents of the government.<sup>12</sup> There were also martyrs like Felix, Bishop of Thibica in Proconsular Africa, who was beheaded for refusing to surrender the Scriptures,<sup>13</sup> or like a group of laymen in Numidia who were put to death for the same reason.<sup>14</sup>

### *The Second and Third Edicts (303)*

While the edict of 303 was being strictly applied everywhere save in Gaul and Britain, some seditious movements troubled the East in the region of Melitene and in Syria. Diocletian naturally saw in these or was persuaded to see in them the work of Christians, and very soon afterwards two further general edicts were issued greatly strengthening the first.<sup>15</sup> One of them ordered the imprisonment of the clergy; the other offered freedom to those who should agree to offer sacrifice, and condemned to torture those who should refuse. The prisons were filled, and the executions of clergy of all ranks began.

### *The Fourth Edict (304)*

Was there a relaxation at the end of the year 303? Eusebius in his work on the Martyrs of Palestine says<sup>16</sup> that on the occasion of his *vicennalia* or celebration of the twentieth year of his reign, on 17th September, Diocletian granted an amnesty, which opened the doors of the prisons. But could Christians profit by this while remaining in an attitude which legally was one of rebellion? That

<sup>12</sup> St. Augustine, *Breviculus collationis cum donatistis*, iii, 25.

<sup>13</sup> *Acta sancti Felicis* (Ruinart, *Acta sincera*, pp. 376-378).

<sup>14</sup> St. Augustine, *Breviculus collationis*, iii, 25-27.

<sup>15</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VIII, vi, 8-10.

<sup>16</sup> Ch. ii.

is indeed doubtful. In any case if there was a momentary amelioration in the situation of ecclesiastics, it was of brief duration, and the general and pitiless persecution broke out again almost at once. Diocletian having fallen ill, Galerius became in fact almost the master of the Empire; a fourth edict was published in the Spring of 304; it renewed the desperate measures of Decius by extending to every Christian without distinction the obligation to offer sacrifice.<sup>17</sup>

This caused rivers of blood to flow. One single group of provinces, Gaul and Britain, continued to escape the horrors involved in the application of this ferocious law, thanks to the tolerant attitude of Constantius. The same was true from 305 in Spain, when, after the joint abdication of Diocletian and Maximian Hercules, Constantius became Augustus of the West and the Spanish provinces were placed under his immediate authority. But the Church meanwhile suffered there in many of its members.

### *The Persecution in Italy*

Italy and Africa seem to have been less cruelly treated than the East and Illyricum after the abdication. The new Western Cæsar, Severus, who in theory was more particularly dependent on Constantius, does not seem to have been very zealous in the execution of the edicts. In any case, he had speedily to yield the imperial throne to the son of Maximian Hercules, Maxentius, who had overthrown him (Autumn of 306). Maxentius, whose interest it was to pacify the inhabitants of his domain, showed himself to be tolerant.<sup>18</sup> The persecution thus raged in the Western provinces of the Empire only a little more than two years. But that was long enough to lead to a multitude of victims.

It is quite likely that we should include in the Diocletian persecution a great number of Roman martyrs of unknown date, and whose deaths are narrated in *Passions* of very doubtful credibility, but which agree for the most part in attributing the heroic deaths of their heroes to this supreme assault upon Christianity.<sup>19</sup> These include SS. Mark and Marcellinus, St. Agnes,<sup>20</sup> Peter, and many

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, iii.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. *infra*, p. 1201.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. *Acta sanctorum*, under dates of their feasts.

<sup>20</sup> In spite of the legendary accounts underlying a Damasian inscription and which have popularised the figure of the young virgin veiled with her hair and

others. Pope Marcellinus died on 24th October 304,<sup>21</sup> "through the persecution," according to Eusebius.<sup>22</sup> But he is accused of a momentary weakness,<sup>23</sup> which may be confirmed by the absence of his name from the calendar of the *Depositio episcoporum*. Lucy,<sup>24</sup> the illustrious saint of Syracuse, and Cassian of Imola, where, if we are to believe the poet Prudentius,<sup>25</sup> he exercised his profession as a schoolmaster, would seem also to have been victims of the Diocletian persecution.

### *Martyrs in Africa, Spain and Rhætia*

St. Afra, a converted courtesan, at Augusta Vindelicorum (Augsburg) in Rhætia;<sup>26</sup> Innocent at Milevis; Nivalis, Matrona, and Salvus at Calama (Guelma);<sup>27</sup> Digna at Rusicades (Philippeville);<sup>28</sup> Crispina, a matron, at Theveste (Tebessa)<sup>29</sup> in Numidia;

miraculously protected against all attempts on her honour, we know practically nothing more of Agnes besides the fact of her martyrdom and its approximate date, between the fourth edict and the abdication of Diocletian. Cf. *Acta SS., Januarii*, Vol. II, pp. 350 *et seq.*

<sup>21</sup> *Liber Pontificalis*, ed. Duchesne, Vol. I, p. 6.

<sup>22</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxxii, 1. Duchesne (*Histoire ancienne de l'Eglise*, Vol. II, pp. 93 *et seq.*) sees in this merely a simple chronological indication, but it seems rather difficult to translate ὃν ὁ διωγμὸς κατείληφεν otherwise than by "whom the persecution removed," i.e. by death.

<sup>23</sup> The note concerning him in the *Liber Pontificalis* and an apocryphal writing later than 500 (the *Acts* of a supposed Council of Sinuesse) say that he consented to offer incense to the gods. Possibly he merely gave up the sacred books. In any case the Donatists made much of his lapse, real or not. Cf. St. Augustine, *Contra litteras Petiliani*, ii, 202; *De unico baptismo*, xxvii. On this obscure question, besides Duchesne, *loc. cit.*, who does not accept the martyrdom of Marcellinus and says that "for a personage of such importance it was regrettable enough in such a time to die in his bed," see E. Caspar, *Kleine Beiträge zur älteren Papstgeschichte*, in *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, Vol. XLVI, 1927, pp. 321 *et seq.* He likewise does not exclude the possibility of a lapse on the part of Marcellinus, followed by a rehabilitation. Cf. also by the same author, *Geschichte des Papsttums*, Vol. I, Tübingen, 1930, pp. 97 *et seq.*

<sup>24</sup> *Legendary Passion* in Surius, *Vitæ sanctorum* (7 vols., Cologne, 1576), Vol. VII, p. 247. On the feast of St. Lucy (13th December) substituted at Syracuse for the pagan feast in honour of *Tellus* or of the *Cereres*, cf. J. Carcopino, *Salluste, le culte des Cereres et les Numides*, in *Revue historique*, Vol. CLVIII, 1928, pp. 1 *et seq.*

<sup>25</sup> *Peri Stephanon*, ix.

<sup>26</sup> Ruinart, *Acta sincera*, p. 50.

<sup>27</sup> Inscription published in the *Bullett. di archeol. cristiana*, Vol. XLV, 1876, pl. iii, no. 2.

<sup>28</sup> Inscription at Rusicades (Philippeville), *Corpus inscriptionum latinorum*, VIII, 1913.

<sup>29</sup> P. Monceaux, *Les actes de sainte Crispine, martyre à Theveste*, in *Mélanges Boissier*, Paris, 1903. The martyrdom of St. Crispina is also referred to in two

Justus and Securus at Sitifis (Setif);<sup>30</sup> Fabius, standard bearer of the governor's guard,<sup>31</sup> in Mauretania; Maxima, Secunda and Donatilla at Thuburbo,<sup>32</sup> forty-eight Christians of Abitene, with the priest Saturninus at their head;<sup>33</sup> some martyrs of unknown name revealed by an inscription recently discovered at Ammœdara (Haidra)<sup>34</sup> in Proconsular Africa; Vincent, a deacon of Cæsaraugusta (Saragossa), executed at Valentia before the promulgation of the fourth edict;<sup>35</sup> some anonymous Christians at Cæsaraugusta (Saragossa),<sup>36</sup> Felix at Gerona,<sup>37</sup> Cucufas at Barcinona (Barcelona),<sup>38</sup> Aciselus and Zoellus at Cordova,<sup>39</sup> Eulalia at Merida<sup>40</sup> in Spain—these are the best known names, but they give an inadequate idea of the part played by the provinces directly governed by Maximian Hercules in the martyrology of the Great Persecution. Peace returned after 305.

### *Martyrs in Illyricum*

In the Illyrian provinces, and in Asia Minor, Syria, and the rest of the East as well as in Egypt, the fanaticism of Galerius and his Cæsar, Maximin Daia, who was his own nephew, equally bitter against the Christians, met with no obstacle. At that time there perished in the states of Galerius, to recall only the names mentioned in *Acts* worthy of credence, St. Philip, Bishop of Heraclea in Thrace, with Severus the priest and Hermes a deacon (22nd October); the three holy women of Thessalonica, Agape, Chionia and Irene (1st April); Montanus, priest at Singidunum in Mœsia

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sermons of St. Augustine, *Enarrationes in Ps. 120 and in Ps. 137*, preached on the occasion of the anniversary. Two other sermons, cclxxxvi, 2, and cccxlv, 5, and the *De sancta virginitate*, xlv (xlv), contain passages on this saint. The *Hieronymian Martyrology* erroneously puts her martyrdom at Thagora.

<sup>30</sup> Inscription published in *Bull. di arch. crist.*, Vol. XIII, 1875, p. 172.

<sup>31</sup> *Passion* in *Analecta Bollandiana*, Vol. IX, 1890, pp. 123 *et seq.*

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 110 *et seq.*

<sup>33</sup> Ruinart, *Acta sincera*, p. 410.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. L. Poinssot, in *Bulletin archéologique du Comité des Travaux historiques*, 1934, Fev., p. xi. The inscription is devoted to the "glorissimis beatissimisque martyribus qui persecutionem Diocletiani et Maximiani divinis legibus passi sunt."

<sup>35</sup> Ruinart, *Acta sincera*, p. 493.

<sup>36</sup> Prudentius, *Peri Stephanon*, iv, 57-58.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 29-30.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 34-35.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 8-9.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 8 *et seq.*

(26th March); Bishop Irenæus of Sirmium in Pannonia (6th April); the deacon Demetrius<sup>41</sup> and five or seven consecrated virgins, in the same city (6th April); Pollio, the head of the lectors at Cibalæ in the same province; Bishop Quirinus of Siscia, also in Pannonia, the year of whose death is uncertain (5th June);<sup>42</sup> Bishop Victorinus of Poetovio (2nd November), and Florianus, a layman, head of the chancellery of the governor at Lauriacum in Norica (4th May).<sup>43</sup> The martyrs of Salona in Dalmatia, Bishop Domnius, Asterius the priest, Septimius the deacon, Anastasius the fuller, with others whose position we do not know, Felix, Victoricus, Gaianus, Paulinianus, Antonianus and Telius may have suffered before Diocletian's abdication.<sup>44</sup> The *Hieronymian Martyrology* contains the names of many other witnesses to Christ attributed by it to the Danubian country and who very probably suffered in the last and "great" persecution.<sup>45</sup> Doubtless there were very many others whose names have been forgotten.

### *The Persecution in the Eastern Provinces*

In Cilicia there perished amongst many others Tarachus, an old soldier; Probus, of plebeian origin, and also Andronicus, of higher

<sup>41</sup> Known only by the *Syrian Martyrology* and the *Hieronymian Martyrology*. Some legendary *Passions* have transformed him into a military personage martyred at Thessalonica.

<sup>42</sup> His *Passion* (Ruinar, *Acta sincera*, p. 549; *Acta Sanctorum*, Junii, I, pp. 380 *et seq.*) puts him under Diocletian and Maximian; the *Peristephanon* of Prudentius under Galerius; The *Chronicle* of Eusebius-Jerome in the year 308, which would correspond to the beginning of the reign of Licinius, under whom, however, the persecution died down, though perhaps not immediately. These statements, moreover, are not contradictory, for the persecution which began in 303 might be called that of Diocletian as long as it continued, and also Galerius was the head of the imperial college of which Licinius formed part.

<sup>43</sup> The *Passions* of these martyrs will be found in the *Acta Sanctorum* for the date indicated. Cf. also Bk. III, pp. 771-772.

<sup>44</sup> The *Chronicon Paschale* gives for the date of Domnius and Felix the seventh consulate of Diocletian and the sixth of Maximian, a date which is certainly inexact, for it would correspond to the year 299. But if we correct it to the ninth and eighth consulates, then we get the very plausible date of 303. On these martyrs of Salona, cf. J. Zeiller, *Les origines chrétiennes dans la province romaine de Dalmatie*, Paris, 1906. On the military profession attributed to Gaianus, Paulinianus Antonianus and Telius, which probably arises from a confusion, cf. Bk. III, p. 772, n. 7.

<sup>45</sup> On all these martyrs, cf. J. Zeiller, *Les origines chrétiennes dans les provinces danubiennes de l'Empire romain*, pp. 61-120.

rank, united in the same martyrdom.<sup>46</sup> In Galatia, we have the seven virgins and the tavern keeper Theodotus at Ancyra;<sup>47</sup> and at Cæsarea in Cappadocia a widow named Julitta.<sup>48</sup> The magistrates of Pontus, according to Eusebius,<sup>49</sup> excelled themselves in discovering new means of torture. Numerous Christians of this province fled to the mountains. Others even crossed the frontiers of the Empire, to seek refuge in Armenia or even as far as Persia, where they were well received.<sup>50</sup> These forced emigrations were destined sometimes to be the starting point of new conversions in the lands outside the Empire.

Syria and Palestine, to the martyrs of which Eusebius of Cæsarea, an eye-witness, devoted a special work, likewise paid their tribute: Tyrannio, Bishop of Tyre, and Zenobius, a priest-doctor of Sidon, were beheaded at Antioch after being exposed in the amphitheatre;<sup>51</sup> at Gaza Timothy was burnt and Agapius and Thecla thrown to wild beasts.<sup>52</sup>

### *In Egypt*

It was in Egypt, the "China" of the ancient world,<sup>53</sup> that the persecution seems to have reached its highest degree of cruelty.<sup>54</sup> Eusebius tells us that in Egypt "innumerable multitudes of the faithful, with their wives and children, suffered various kinds of death for the faith."<sup>55</sup> The persecution reached such a point that sometimes pagans were seized with pity and assisted Christians to escape the fate which threatened them. We have the explicit assurance of St. Athanasius on this point:<sup>56</sup> "I heard our fathers say that when the

<sup>46</sup> Ruinart, *Acta sincera*, p. 458.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 357.

<sup>48</sup> St. Basil, *Homil.*, v, 1-2.

<sup>49</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VIII, xii, 6.

<sup>50</sup> Eusebius, *De Vita Constantini*, ii, 5, 3; St. Gregory Nazianzen, *Oratio*, xliii, 5-8.

<sup>51</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VIII, vii.

<sup>52</sup> Eusebius, *Martyrs of Palestine*, lxxiii.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. F. Cumont, *Les religions orientales dans le paganisme romain*, 4th edn., Paris, 1929, p. 74, where this comparison is made. See also in G. Perrot and C. Chipiez, *Histoire de l'art dans l'antiquité*, Vol. III, Paris, 1911, p. 399, for an ingenious comparison between Naucratis, the Hellenic port of Egypt, and Hong-Kong.

<sup>54</sup> Eusebius, *Martyrs of Palestine*, lxxiii.

<sup>55</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VIII, viii. In ch. ix, he adds that in the Thebaid the executions continued during whole years at the rate of ten, twenty, sixty or even a hundred a day.

<sup>56</sup> *Historia arianorum ad monachos*, lxiv.

persecutions began, some pagans concealed our Christian brethren from the search made by their enemies, even sacrificing their goods or going to prison rather than betray them: they welcomed those of our belief who took refuge with them, and exposed themselves to danger in order to protect them."

That a certain instinct of popular resistance to measures emanating from the central government may have thus led the natives of Egypt, who had not been romanised to any great extent, like the inhabitants of Northern Africa, to side with the victims, is quite feasible. But in spite of this, in face of the cruelty of the persecutors, we find the beginnings of an attitude of opposition on the part of the pagan population, combining a certain critical spirit with sentiments not only of ordinary humanity but perhaps also of esteem and interest in people whose goodness and charity they had already come to appreciate. Imperial policy had oscillated between severity towards a society regarded by it as dangerous for the State and toleration, if not benevolence, towards its members, whose high individual merits it had to admit. In the same way, public opinion, long hostile or at least mistrustful, and often contemptuous and scornful, sometimes had to confess the existence of virtues which it did not always understand, and this gradually led to sympathy.

### § 3. THE PERSECUTION AFTER DIOCLETIAN'S ABDICATION

#### *Cessation of the Persecution in the West*

Was it because they were at least obscurely conscious of this that, following the abdication of 305, some of the new emperors, without abrogating the existing edicts, did in fact stop the persecution or allow it to cease? In the case of Constantius, this was to be expected: as soon as Spain had been transferred from the authority of Maximian Hercules to his own, the severities ceased entirely. But Severus, although a creature of Galerius, brought about the same result in Italy and Africa: the Christians there had a respite, though not yet certain as to the future, for at Rome they did not venture to choose a successor for Pope Marcellinus, and the see remained vacant until 308. At that time Maxentius, son of Maximian Hercules, had seized power and, doubtless desiring to be supported by as many as



possible, he did not hesitate to adopt a favourable attitude towards Christians.<sup>1</sup> He was a man of the world, possibly rather sceptical in religious matters, and seems not to have been prejudiced against Christianity. Moreover, his own mother, Eutropia, became a Christian, though this may have happened only after the death of her husband Maximian Hercules and the victory of her son-in-law Constantine.<sup>2</sup>

The final defeat of Maxentius by Constantine and the character almost of a crusade attributed by later tradition to the campaign his fortunate rival fought against him<sup>3</sup> made him seem to be, as it were, the incarnation of the dying pagan Empire in face of the Christian Empire founded by his conqueror. Eusebius regards him as a "tyrant";<sup>4</sup> Constantine cancelled his acts,<sup>5</sup> and his cruel despotism certainly made him rapidly unpopular. Nevertheless it remains true that Christians as such did not have reason to complain of him, and Eusebius expressly allows that he gave to his officers an order "to abstain from persecuting."<sup>6</sup>

True, on the occasion of the repressing of a rising by an African usurper, Alexander, the Christians, intentionally or otherwise confounded with the rebels, shared in the punishments. But even in regard to the African clergy, Maxentius knew how to show himself accommodating. Mensurius, Bishop of Carthage, had courageously refused to give up a deacon accused of having written a defamatory libel against the prince. He was summoned to the Court, expecting the worst, but Maxentius accepted his defence, and sent him back a free man to his episcopal city. Mensurius, however, did not live to see this again, as he died on his way.<sup>7</sup> In fine, apart from the bloody episode arising from Alexander's usurpation, we can say that severities ceased in Africa with the imperial abdication in 305, though not without leaving lasting traces, and the germs of new evils.

<sup>1</sup> On the policy of Maxentius towards Christians, cf. A. Pincherle, *La politica ecclesiastica di Massenzio*, in *Studi di filologia classica*, Nuove serie, VII, 1929, pp. 131 *et seq.* See also: E. Caspar, *Geschichte des Papsttums*, Tübingen, 1930, pp. 101 *et seq.*, and *Kleine Beiträge zur älteren Papstgeschichte*, in *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, Vol. XLV, 1927, pp. 321 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> Eusebius, *Vita Constantini*, iii, 52.

<sup>3</sup> See *The Church in the Christian Roman Empire*.

<sup>4</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VIII, xiv, 3.

<sup>5</sup> On the *rescissio actorum* by Maxentius, cf. *The Church in the Christian Roman Empire*.

<sup>6</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, VIII, xiv, 1.

<sup>7</sup> St. Optatus, *De schismate donatistorum*, i.

*After-effects of the Persecution. Rise of the Donatist Schism in Africa*

From the Spring of 305, bishops began to meet in order to appoint successors to those who had disappeared. In one of these meetings, held at Cirta under the presidency of the senior bishop of Numidia, Secundus of Tigisi, a pretext was found for instituting an enquiry into the conduct of the heads of churches during the critical times, and the atmosphere became full of suspicion in consequence. At Carthage, likewise, Mensurius was suspected of having been too clever<sup>8</sup> by the confessors who themselves had to suffer in prison, who reproached him with not having helped them as he ought to have done. Mensurius died, and was replaced by his deacon Cæcilianus, who on his orders had sometimes moderated the excessive zeal of the faithful in regard to the confessors. A campaign, supported by numerous Numidian bishops more inclined to intransigence, including amongst others Donatus of Casæ Nigræ, was very soon started against the newly elected bishop, and he was accused of having been a *traditor*, and of receiving consecration from another real or supposed *traditor*, Felix of Aptonga. This was the beginning of the terrible Donatist schism,<sup>9</sup> which so plainly revealed a centrifugal tendency carrying certain Christian groups outside Catholic unity, and some ethnic groups outside the imperial unity.

*The Roman Schisms*

The same causes led to similar effects in the Roman Church, though fortunately these were not so serious in character. But just as, after the Decian persecution, there had been African and Roman schisms for contrary reasons, that of Novatus at Carthage favouring laxity and that of Novatian in Rome rigorism, so that the disagreements in the two churches following the Diocletian persecution developed in opposite directions, though the situations were in fact reversed: the Roman dissidents were this time on the side of leniency. In 308 the Christian Community in Rome decided that the choice of a new Pope could no longer be deferred, and Marcellus

<sup>8</sup> Cf. above, p. 1195.

<sup>9</sup> On the beginnings of Donatism, cf. the report of the meeting at Cirta, read at the Conference of 411, III, 351-355, 387-400, 408-432, 452-470; St. Augustine, *Breviculus collationis*, III, 25-27, 31-33; *Adversus Cresconium*, III, 30; *Contra litteras Petiliani*, I, 23; *De unico baptisinate*, 29-31; *Ad Donatistas*, xviii; *Contra Gaudentium*, I, 47; *Epistolæ*, xliii, 3.

was elected.<sup>10</sup> After so long an interregnum, Marcellus found much to do by way of reorganisation, and amongst other things he restored or raised the presbyteral "titles" in Rome to the number of twenty-four. But he found himself immediately faced with the problem of the *lapsi*, made more difficult still perhaps by the fact that the late Pope had himself failed to give an example of heroism, and his successor found it necessary to react accordingly.<sup>11</sup> In any case, there had been numerous apostates, and these now claimed readmission into the Church without doing penance. There was open discord between them and the faithful who were on the side of discipline: one day blood was shed, and the government of Maxentius, holding the new bishop responsible, condemned him to exile. He died in exile, and was replaced by Eusebius, whose arrival led to a renewal of disturbances. The election was not unanimous. The party who had opposed Marcellus wanted another candidate, Heraclius, and the divisions began again. There followed four months of agitations, which brought about a new intervention by the imperial authority. The two rivals were banished; Eusebius, interned in Sicily, died there shortly afterwards (310), and the see was left vacant for the moment. The Christian community of Rome provided itself with a new bishop, Miltiades, only in July 311, after the general return of peace to the Church.<sup>12</sup>

### *Rise of the Meletian Schism in Egypt*

The Church of Egypt, as we remarked in connection with St. Peter of Alexandria, also had its internal crisis, for reasons of the same kind, and about the same time. As in the case of the Christian communities depending on Carthage, it was the intransigent faction which led to the outbreak of the conflict.<sup>13</sup> The merciful measures of Peter towards the *lapsi* led to a protest by Bishop Meletius of

<sup>10</sup> *Liber Pontificalis*, ed. Duchesne, I, p. 164.

<sup>11</sup> The only documentation we have on Roman matters connected with the persecution are the epitaphs of Marcellus and his successor Eusebius, written about half a century afterwards by Pope Damasus. Cf. De Rossi, *Inscriptiones christianæ Urbis Romæ*, II, pp. 62, 63, 138. Though these are not explicit, they give the impression that Marcellus was regarded as too strict by many of the Roman Christians, though he merely maintained the necessary penitential discipline. Cf. the work of Caspar mentioned above, p. 1202, n. 1.

<sup>12</sup> *Liber Pontificalis*, relevant references, and Damasian inscriptions mentioned in note 11.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. *supra*, pp. 1047-1048.

Nicopolis in Upper Egypt. Not content with protesting against the conditions, which he declared to be not sufficiently severe, he tried to introduce disorganisation into the Egyptian Church, holding illicit ordinations in various centres, and even attempting to dispossess the Bishop of Alexandria of his authority by substituting for the vicars who secretly acted in his place during the persecution which soon recommenced, some creatures of his own. Meletius was excommunicated by Peter, arrested, and sent to the mines. When the persecution ended in 311, he returned, together with his partisans, equally hostile to their opponents, though many of the latter, with Peter at their head, had been martyred. Thus began the Meletian schism, as it is called, a new manifestation of the centrifugal tendencies then at work in the Church as in the Empire, which lasted until the middle of the fourth century.<sup>14</sup>

### *The Persecution in the East and in Illyricum*

The persecution, after a relaxation which was perhaps a promise rather than a reality, had begun again in the States of Galerius (Illyricum and Asia Minor), and had increased in those of Maximin Daia (Syria and Egypt). We have no means of estimating its victims. But we are able to put in the year 306 or 307 the martyrdom at Sirmium on 22nd or 23rd February of an ordinary believer who lived on the produce of a garden where he led an eremitical life. His name was Sineros or Sinerotas; he had remained hidden during the early days of the persecution.<sup>15</sup> In 306 apparently there perished also some who became famous under the name of the Four Crowned Saints, although in fact they were five in number. They were working sculptors employed in the quarries near Sirmium, where they executed various figures destined to decorate monuments. They appear to have been condemned for refusing to carve an Æsculapius at the commands of Diocletian, who had by then given up the throne

<sup>14</sup> The sources concerning this schism are: (1) The *Canonical Epistle* of the Bishop St. Peter, with Syriac supplements edited by P. de Lagarde, in his *Reliquiæ juris ecclesiastici antiquissimæ*, Vienna, 1856, retranslated into Greek by E. Schwartz, *Zur Geschichte des Athanasius*, in *Nachrichten* of Göttingen, 1905, pp. 162 *et seq.*; (2) Some documents inserted at the end of the *Historia acephala* of St. Athanasius included in the collection called that of the deacon Theodosius, known through a manuscript of Verona (LX) republished by P. Batiffol, *La Synodicon d'Athanase*, in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, Vol. X, 1901, pp. 128 *et seq.* Cf. *supra*, pp. 1047-1048.

<sup>15</sup> Ruinart, *Acta sincera*, p. 545.

and who, the year after his abdication, seems to have gone to Sirmium to superintend in person the carrying out of various works for the decoration of his palace at Salona, whither he had retired.<sup>16</sup>

The persecution died down in Illyricum, at any rate in the Western portion, after 307, when Licinius, named successor to Severus, had been established there by Galerius.<sup>17</sup>

As for Maximin Daia, still more fanatically anti-Christian, perhaps, than his uncle Galerius, Eusebius says that he published new edicts ordering the governors to compel all Christians to sacrifice.<sup>18</sup> Numerous martyrdoms took place almost everywhere from Asia Minor to Egypt. Thus, at Alexandria, Philoromus, who had been a very high magistrate, *juridicus* or ἀρχιδικαστής, chief justice in the capital or for the rest of Egypt, was decapitated, together with the Bishop of Thmuis, Phileas, on the orders of the prefect.<sup>19</sup> Many others perished also, sometimes with unusual refinements of cruelty.<sup>20</sup> At Gaza and at Cæsarea in Palestine there were many exe-

<sup>16</sup> *Acta Sanctorum, Novembris*, Vol. III, pp. 748 *et seq.*, with valuable critical and historical studies by Père H. Delehay. The *Passion* of the five Pannonian sculptors, which seems reliable, represents them as condemned by Diocletian himself, who moreover seems to have decided to do so with reluctance. It also mentions a Bishop of Antioch, Cyril, deported from his see to the quarries of Sirmium in 303, and who had been there for three years. In that case the martyrdom would have taken place in 306, and Diocletian's presence would be explained by the facts mentioned above. His abdication did not take away his power to have the law applied to Christians. N. Vulic (*Quelques observations sur la Passio Sanctorum Quattuor Coronatorum*, in *Rivista di Archeologia cristiana*, Vol. XI, 1934, pp. 156 *et seq.*) has recently criticised the topographical data of the *Passion*. Mgr. Kirsch (*Die Passio der heilige "Vier Gehronten" in Rom*, in *Historisches Jahrbuch*, Vol. XXXVIII, 1917, pp. 72 *et seq.*) passes a more severe judgment on the *Passio Sanctorum coronatorum*, and regards it as of no historical value. But that is an isolated opinion. On this subject, greatly complicated by the juxtaposition of two *Passions*, that of the five Pannonian sculptors and that of the Roman *Quattuor coronati*, cf. J. Zeiller, *Les origines chrétiennes dans les provinces danubiennes de l'Empire romain*, pp. 88 *et seq.*, where a bibliography down to 1918 will be found.

<sup>17</sup> But see above, p. 1199, the note concerning the martyrdom of St. Quirinus of Siscia, possibly put to death under Licinius. The *Passion* of SS. Hermylas and Stratonicus, martyrs at Singididunum (Belgrade) (cf. *Acta Sanctorum, Januarii*, Vol. I, p. 769), also puts their deaths under Licinius. But this attribution is not at all certain.

<sup>18</sup> Eusebius, *De marty. Pales.*, iv, 8. The Cæsars had only a mitigated legislative authority, and the edicts of 304 laid down nothing like the new orders mentioned by Eusebius. Accordingly, what happened probably was that Maximin sent instructions to the governors, after assuming power, commanding them to apply the laws in force without mercy.

<sup>19</sup> *Acta SS. Phileæ et Philoromi* (Ruinart, *Acta sincera*, p. 548).

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, VIII, viii and ix.

cutions; the most illustrious victim was the learned priest and doctor Pamphilus, the master and friend of Eusebius of Cæsarea. Many of the faithful of Cæsarea were condemned to the terrible work of the mines, after losing an eye.<sup>21</sup>

There was only a brief period in 308 when the violence of the persecution seemed to lessen in the Eastern countries. Maximin, unwilling to remain Cæsar seeing that Galerius had replaced Severus Augustus by his friend Licinius, doubtless manifested his irritation by an act of independence lessening the rigorous measures against the Christians.<sup>22</sup> But they were soon resumed.

Galerius, who had been the real author of the persecution and who was obliged to admit himself vanquished by the peaceful resistance of the Christians, eventually had to make amends by declaring peace. Decius, in view of the spectacle of manifold apostasies, had, in spite of many contrary examples, been able to cherish the illusion of having dealt a death-blow at Christianity. Valerian, occupied by external troubles, had no time to judge the results of his own attempt. Galerius and Diocletian himself in his retreat had their defeat plainly before their eyes.

#### § 4. END OF THE PERSECUTION. GALERIUS'S EDICT OF TOLERATION (311)

##### *The Change in Galerius*

The change was indeed so unexpected that Christians naturally saw the work of Almighty Providence in the circumstances, so tragic for the persecuting Emperor, which led him to inaugurate at the last a policy deliberately disavowing the one he had begun eight years before. Involved in the difficulties of a political situation which had transformed the tetrarchy of Diocletian into a veritable imperial anarchy, he began, at the commencement of the year 310, to suffer from a strange and fearful disease. In his avenging work, *On the Death of Persecutors*, Lactantius has described the horrible progress of this disease: <sup>1</sup> incurable abscesses, hæmorrhages, gangrene, and

<sup>21</sup> Eusebius, *De martyr. Pales.*, ix *et seq.*

<sup>22</sup> This very brief period of calm is mentioned by Eusebius, *De martyr. Pales.*, ix, 1.

<sup>1</sup> *De mortibus persecutorum*, xxxiii. Cf. also Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VIII, xvi, 4, and the following pagan writers: Aurelius Victor, *De Cæsaribus*, xi, 9; *Epitome*, xl, 4, 5; Zosimus, *History*, ii, 11.

the invasion of the body by worms. The disease grew worse during eighteen months, at the end of which Galerius seems to have agreed with his victims, if not in regarding his misfortune as a divine punishment, at least in confessing that only their God could give him any solace. His mental sufferings, a combination of despair in presence of an incurable disease and a last hope of salvation, together with the realisation of political failure and the futility of so much bloodshed, resulted in the edict issued in April 311, a veritable charter of freedom for the Church, suddenly issued in the name of Galerius, Licinius and Constantine, and doubtless also in that of Maximin Daia,<sup>2</sup> although his name is absent from the text we possess. It was issued at Sardica, where Galerius then was, together with Licinius, himself already in favour of toleration, and who may perhaps have had much to do with its proclamation.<sup>3</sup>

### *The Edict of 311*

It is a strange edict, which has the appearance of a compromise between two still antagonistic tendencies, and which, though decreeing toleration, begins almost like an edict of persecution, joining to the accusation that Christians had abandoned the religion of their forefathers the unexpected one that they had not even been faithful to their own. This was doubtless an allusion to the heresies which had divided the Church: "Amongst all the measures we have constantly taken for the good and utility of the State," says this disconcerting text,<sup>4</sup> "we have hitherto tried to bring back all things to the ancient laws and to the traditional discipline of the Romans, and in particular to ensure that the Christians, who had abandoned

<sup>2</sup> The name of Maximin Daia is absent in the text which has come down to us, because the memory of this emperor was subsequently abolished officially. Similarly the name of Licinius, which appeared in the first edition of Eusebius, disappeared in the last edition, by reason of the rupture between him and Constantine, which after his defeat involved the legal destruction of anything that might recall his memory.

<sup>3</sup> H. Gregoire (*La "conversion" de Constantin*, in *Revue de l'Université de Bruxelles*, Vol. XXXVI, 1930-1931, pp. 231 *et seq.*) makes Licinius the real author of the edict of toleration. His policy in the years which followed would seem to justify this hypothesis without, however, giving it more than a fairly high degree of probability.

<sup>4</sup> Text in Lactantius, *De mort. persecutorum*, xxxiv; Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VIII, xvii. Lactantius has conserved the original Latin text, without the imperial heading, which is known only in the Greek translation of Eusebius, in the two forms indicated above.

the religion of their fathers, should return to better ways. But such was their evil will and their folly that they did not even keep to the ancient customs instituted by their first founders, but made for themselves laws according to their caprices, and held various assemblies in various places. Finally, after we had ordered that everyone should return to the ancient customs, many obeyed through fear, and many were also punished. But as the majority persevered in their obstinacy, and we realised that on the one hand they were not giving to the gods the worship and honour due to them, and on the other hand were not adoring the god of the Christians"—an evident allusion to the compulsory abandonment of religious assemblies—"in virtue of our extreme clemency and our ordinary custom to deal gently with all men, we have decided to extend our indulgence even to them, and to allow henceforth that Christians should exist and restore their assemblies, provided they do nothing against discipline. In another letter we shall communicate to the magistrates the rules they are to follow. In return for our indulgence, Christians ought to pray to their God for our welfare, for that of the State, and for themselves, so that the Commonweal may enjoy a perfect prosperity and that they may be able to live securely in their habitations."

This was an admission of failure: the Emperor confessed that he had not been able to overcome the passive resistance of the Christians. He yielded and the "*licet esse christianos*" was proclaimed in a manner that was to be definitive. The restoration of the right of assembly was joined to the recognition of liberty of conscience and of worship, to use modern terms. It involved the return to the Church of ecclesiastical property not yet alienated, for the authorisation to hold religious assemblies implied the restitution of confiscated places of worship; the "*conventicula*" mentioned in the edict comprise both the assemblies themselves and the places where they took place. The restitutions, certified by texts, made by Maxentius in Italy<sup>5</sup> leave no room for doubt concerning the initiative of Galerius, or more exactly of the imperial college of which he was the head, in this matter. The reservation, "provided they do nothing against discipline," was quite natural, and even obligatory on the part of him who represented the State, and the announcement of a further communication destined to guide the magistrates in applying the edict might, moreover, open the door to irksome restrictions.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *infra*, p. 1210.



The Emperor Maximin Daia, in particular, who was not himself inclined to cease the fight against Christians, found in it a weapon which he knew how to employ.<sup>6</sup>

In point of fact it seems that the detailed measures announced by the emperors were not promulgated. At any rate, we have no positive indication that Galerius really published the rescript for the magistrates announced in his edict. Doubtless he died too soon, for his life came to an end on 5th May 311.

### *Maximin Daia Continues Hostilities in the East*

Did his death encourage Maximin Daia to carry on a particular policy to which he was already inclined? Certainly the cessation of the persecution was not general after the edict of Galerius. It is more than likely that, although Maximin's name does not appear in the text we possess,<sup>7</sup> he had officially signed the edict with his colleagues, who were always understood to legislate collectively. But whereas the edict was posted up in all the provinces depending on Galerius, Licinius and Constantine—and again, in the Italian and African domain of Maxentius, who did not want to do less in regard to Christians than the imperial college which regarded him as an intruder, the places of worship hitherto remaining in the hands of the authorities were given back to the Christians<sup>8</sup>—Maximin Daia in his own provinces did not publish the edict. His Prætorian Prefect Sabinus merely informed the provincial governors of it, on his orders,<sup>9</sup> charging them to let the city magistrates know that the Emperors had given up the idea of bringing back Christians to the State religion, and that these were no longer to be persecuted for this reason. Thereupon the prisons were opened, and Christian worship began to be celebrated once more, especially in the cemeteries on the tombs of the martyrs. But in the case of the Eastern provinces, and not only Syria and Egypt but also Asia Minor, where Daia had, following the death of Galerius, increased his portion at the expense of Licinius, this relaxation was once again only a mo-

<sup>6</sup> The significance of the Edict of Galerius has been well brought out in a work by J. B. Knipping, *The Edict of Galerius (A.D. 311) Reconsidered*, in *Revue belge de Philologie et d'Histoire*, 1922, p. 693.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 1208, n. 2.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *The Church in the Christian Roman Empire*.

<sup>9</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, IX, i, 3-6, gives the text in Greek, translated from the Latin original.

mentary one. The death of Galerius, coming so soon after the publication of his edict, freed Maximin from all control, and he did not hesitate gradually to renew the religious war. Moreover, this was accompanied by an external war, itself resulting from the hostility of the emperor towards Christianity. Apparently he wished to compel the Armenians, friends and allies of the Empire who had become Christians, to return to paganism. They rebelled, and Maximin Daia did not succeed in overcoming them.<sup>10</sup> Inside his provinces, the anti-Christian campaign took very varying forms, including an attempt to establish a kind of pagan opposition-Church, in which the priesthoods were organised hierarchically according to cities and provinces as in the case of the Christian Church,<sup>11</sup> while those holding such offices were in fact personages prominent in the civil hierarchy, endowed with external powers calculated to increase their prestige, and armed with powers to proceed against the Christians.<sup>12</sup> Again, we find a diffusion of supposed *Acts of Pilate*, insulting Christ;<sup>13</sup> the encouragement of cities still dominated by pagans to ask for the expulsion of Christians, of whom a number, difficult to estimate but certainly not insignificant, were reduced to wander about in the country districts;<sup>14</sup> manifold vexations, and lastly new executions. It was indeed a renewal of hostilities, and there perished amongst others Bishops Sylvanus of Emesa and Peter of Alexandria,<sup>15</sup> other Egyptian bishops, and the famous priest-theologian Lucian of Antioch. Hostilities continued intermittently until Daia

<sup>10</sup> This war is known to us only through Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, IX, viii, 2, 4. Possibly we should identify these Armenians with the inhabitants of five satrapies across the Tigris, added to the Empire after the victory of Galerius in 297, but which remained under the rule of national leaders, who had become Christians, with the reigning dynasty and a great part of the population of the kingdom of Armenia.

<sup>11</sup> Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutorum*, xxxvi and xxxvii; Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VIII, xiv, 2; Julian, *Epist.*, v, 16; St. Gregory Nazianzen, *Orat.*, iv, 111; Sozomen, *Hist. eccles.*, V, xvi.

<sup>12</sup> Lactantius, *ibid.*, xxxvii; Eusebius, *ibid.*, VIII, xiv, 9 and IX, iv, 2. Cf. H. Gregoire, *Notes Epigraphiques*, I: *La religion de Maximin Daia*, in *Byzantion*, Vol. VIII, 1933, pp. 49 *et seq.*

<sup>13</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, IX, v, 1. On the spurious *Acts of Pilate*, see a short but excellent summary in P. de Labriolle, *La réaction païenne*, pp. 327-328.

<sup>14</sup> Some well-known texts, such as the Aricanda inscription (*Corpus inscriptionum latinarum*, III, 12132), have given examples of these petitions from cities wishing to please the prince by bringing about the expulsion of a Christian population with which they no longer desired to have any contact. In view of modern events, no one can say that such compulsory evacuations were impossible or improbable.

<sup>15</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, IX, vi; cf. VIII, xiii.

yielded when summoned by Constantine in 312.<sup>16</sup> Then, having quarrelled with Licinius, ally of Constantine, who himself had conquered Maxentius, Maximin was finally eliminated in 318.<sup>17</sup>

### *Final Peace*

The *entente* between these two emperors, Licinius and Constantine, resulted, after their meeting at Milan in 312, in the establishing of new relations between the Church and the Empire, more favourable to the former than the Edict of Galerius, and which has long been called, not correctly from the historical point of view<sup>18</sup> though not without reason nevertheless, the Edict of Milan. The new state of things defined by this phrase marks the final stage in a transformation which came about in consequence of the conversion to Christianity of Constantine, the prince, who had then become the real head of the imperial college and was later to become the sole emperor. This "conversion" of Constantine, which has been the subject of much discussion as to its date, its sincerity, and even its reality, inaugurates a new period in the external history of the Church, the beginnings of which, i.e. the exact circumstances and character of this conversion, will be considered in another work.<sup>19</sup> But what already closed the former period, that of the persecutions, in spite of the prolongation of the war against Christianity by Maximin Daia, was the Edict of Galerius. From that day the Empire, morally vanquished in the religious sphere, recognised the right of Christians to exist and to practise their religion, and this right will henceforward be no longer contested, at least openly.

<sup>16</sup> On the rescript addressed at that time by Maximin to his prefect Sabinus, and proclaiming toleration, though without conviction (Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, IX, x, 9), cf. *The Church in the Christian Roman Empire*.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> Cf. *The Church in the Christian Roman Empire*.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. I.

## THE EXTENT OF THE CHRISTIAN CONQUEST ON THE EVE OF THE PEACE OF CONSTANTINE

THE long struggle in which the Roman Empire had been engaged against the Christians ended in the victory of the latter. This does not mean that they had already conquered the whole Roman Empire by reason of their numbers. But the dynamic power which was behind them had overcome all obstacles. The future was theirs, and their uninterrupted march of conquest bade fair to go beyond even the rich promise of that time, just as in space it had gone beyond the frontiers of the Empire. For about the year 310 Christianity had already extended its progress beyond the Roman lands, in Africa, amongst the Goths of the country beyond the Danube, in Armenia, Persia, and even as far as the Indies.

### § 1. STATE OF THE CHRISTIAN CONQUEST. ITS EXTENT AND ITS LIMITS

#### *Christianisation of the East*

From the standpoint of numbers, the situation of Christianity in the Empire differed much according to the various regions. It constituted a majority,<sup>1</sup> or almost a majority, at least in the cities in some parts of the East, and an imposing minority in others. On the other hand, in some great cities where the old religions still had numerous and earnest believers, as at Antioch for example, Christians encountered energetic resistance, and the partial success of the policy of Daia, inviting requests for the expulsion of Christians from their pagan fellow-citizens, testifies to the continued existence of these civic strongholds of Eastern paganism.

Nevertheless, on the whole it is certain that by 300 the Christianisation of the East had gone very far. It had made more progress in Hellenic or hellenised parts like Asia Minor, Thrace, Macedonia

<sup>1</sup> Eusebius (*Hist. eccles.*, VIII, xi) mentions a small town in Phrygia which had become entirely Christian with all its rulers.

and the Greek coasts, than in Egypt and especially the Semitic countries such as Syria.

### *Weaker Diffusion of Christianity in the West*

There was a much weaker diffusion of Christianity in the West. But it would be an exaggeration to say that, apart from the Mediterranean shores, the West was scarcely affected.<sup>2</sup> In Spain, authentic data concerning the Valerian Persecution and the large number of sees represented at the Council of Elvira prove an already deep penetration of the interior of the country by Christianity. Though the number of bishoprics in Gaul prior to the fourth century was rather limited, there were a few in existence some distance away from the Mediterranean shores, e.g. at Bordeaux, Bourges, Sens, Paris, Rouen, Soissons, Rheims, Châlons, and Trèves. In Italy, it is hardly likely that Maxentius would have carried out from the first a policy favourable to the Christians if they had only been a mere handful of men. In Africa, we have noticed the great number of bishops assembling in a series of councils held under the presidency of the Bishop of Carthage from the end of the second century until the close of the last persecution; the after effects of this on the whole life of the provinces, which was to be profoundly upset by Donatism, show the place held by the Christian element in these countries. Even so, it remains true that there was still much to be done to propagate the Gospel in the West, where country districts had hardly been touched, while in the Asiatic and Hellenic East, as well as in Egypt, Christian communities in villages were no longer an exception.

### *Evangelisation of the Country Districts Begins in the East*

We must not forget that, already in the first years of the second century, Pliny the Younger expressed his alarm, doubtless exaggerating somewhat, at the success of Christian propaganda in the little hamlets of Bithynia. Two and a half centuries later we get a very paradoxical position. According to Theodoret,<sup>3</sup> the Mesopotamian town of Kaskar remained obstinately pagan, while the neigh-

<sup>2</sup> Such is the thesis of H. Gregoire, *La "conversion" de Constantin*, in *Revue de l'Université de Bruxelles*, Vol. XXXVI, 1930-1931, pp. 231 et seq.

<sup>3</sup> *Hist. eccles.*, IV, xviii.

bouring country, according to the *Acta disputationis sancti Archelai cum Manete hæretico*<sup>4</sup> and the *Peregrinatio Aetheriæ*,<sup>5</sup> was full of monasteries and hermitages, and peopled by Christians.

### *It Was Still Very Weak in the West*

We hear of nothing similar in the West. But we must note that St. Irenæus in one place complains that he is forgetting Greek among the Celts,<sup>6</sup> which implies that he often addressed himself to the "rustici." But we read nothing like this in St. Cyprian for instance, and we should perhaps find it difficult to produce other testimonies to a similar preaching of the Gospel in native tongues, such as the Iberian language and Punic, as also to discover precise traces of recruitment of clergy from the non-Roman elements of the African, Hispanic, Gallic or Illyrian populations. But it would probably be going too far to base an entirely negative conclusion on this.

### *Christianity the Religion of Humble Folk*

On the other hand, we know well that Christianity was in great measure the religion of the humble, and was regarded as such. "I do not address myself," wrote Tertullian in his *De testimonio animæ*,<sup>7</sup> "to those who have been trained in the schools, or in the libraries. . . . It is to you I speak, you, O simple and ignorant souls, who have learnt only what one picks up in the streets or in taverns." Celsus had said previously, putting the words in the mouths of Christians with an obvious hostility: "If there is anywhere a clodhopper, a fool, or a nonentity, let him come to us with confidence." And Origen, replying to him, found no difficulty in allowing that Christianity found the majority of its believers among "the weavers, the fullers, and shoemakers,"<sup>8</sup> or, as St. Jerome will say a hundred and fifty years later, "from the midst of the lowest people."<sup>9</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Migne, P.G., Vol. X, 1492 *et seq.* The detail retains its value even if the *Acta* are only a fiction.

<sup>5</sup> *Sanctæ Sylviæ peregrinatio*, xxx, in *Itinera Hierosolymitana*, ed. Geyer in *Vienna Corpus*, Vol. XXXIX, pp. 35 *et seq.* (This deals with ancient itineraries of pilgrimages.)

<sup>6</sup> *Adversus Hæreses*, I, Prefatio.

<sup>7</sup> *De testimonio animæ*, i.

<sup>8</sup> *Contra Celsum*, III, lv.

<sup>9</sup> "Ecclesia Christi non de Academia et Lyceo, sed de vili plebecula congregata est" (St. Jerome, *Commentarium in Epistolam ad Galatas*, I, III, ad cap v, vers. 6).

*It Also Gained Numerous Recruits from Those in Higher Society*

But we must never lose sight of the conquests made quite early among the members of the intellectual or social aristocracy, such as Dionysius the Areopagite at Athens, the Proconsul Sergius converted by St. Paul, and the members of several senatorial families and even of the imperial families in Rome.<sup>10</sup> At the end of the second and in the course of the third century, the conversion of a growing part of the *élite* towards Christianity continued. Tertullian spoke of "clarissimi" <sup>11</sup> as Christians; good provincial families provided officers of the Church like Gregory Thaumaturgus, Bishop of Neocæsarea in Pontus, intended at first for the bar, and brother-in-law of an Assessor of Judea, or like Cyprian of Carthage, who came from a family of decurions, and was a well-known advocate in his city. St. Perpetua, who was martyred there, had a right to the title of "matron." We have seen that in Asia Minor and Spain many Christians were members of the *curiæ*.<sup>12</sup> It seems indeed, from the rosy picture painted by Eusebius of the last years of the third century, that there was still greater progress: the Court itself, already once half Christian under Alexander Severus, and the magistracies were full of Christians.

## § 2. THE ULTIMATE REASONS FOR THE RESISTANCE TO CHRISTIANITY

*The Alleged Incompatibility between Christianity and Rome*

The progressive conquest by Christianity and its acceleration during certain favourable periods doubtless led to the main attempts at resistance, and sudden and violent attacks in the form of the three general persecutions under Decius, Valerian, and Diocletian and his colleagues. What were the fundamental causes of this effort, succeeding others less systematic and less severe, made in order to put a stop to the rising tide of Christianity and to hurl it back once for all? We have already mentioned them. They may be summed up in the conviction that Christianity was incompatible with the Roman idea. Christians, who would not adore the gods of the Em-

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Bk. II, pp. 382-384, and Bk. III, pp. 761 *et seq.*, 800-801, 809, and *supra*, p. 1155.

<sup>11</sup> This is the official term used of members of senatorial families. Cf. Tertullian, *Ad Scapulam*, v.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 1155.

pire, beginning with its divine emperor, were accused of disloyalty. Whether they were accused in the course of the two and a half centuries separating Nero and Constantine, of *odium generis humani*, to use the expression of Tacitus,<sup>1</sup> or of atheism, it was always their lack of interest in the destiny of their earthly fatherland that was urged against them, either implicitly or explicitly.

We have discussed both the motives and the injustice of such a judgment. Neither in the matter of military service, nor in regard to public functions, was there in practice any general and premeditated refusal by Christians to take part in the life of the State. It was only the close union between the religious and public life of the city of that time that constituted an obstacle to a more complete manifestation of a civic spirit which the instructions of the apostles Peter and Paul on duties towards Authority, and their inculcation of obedience, wholehearted respect and cordial good will, and the Roman sentiments of a man like Clement, showed beyond doubt to have been present in the first generation of Christians. Neither the possibly less favourable tendencies on the part of a certain number of Christians of that generation, hypnotised by the expectation of the *Parousia*, nor the dreams of a few Millenarianists of the following century, obsessed by the idea of great cataclysms in which the Empire and its worldly power would collapse, nor the secessionist<sup>2</sup> spirit of Tertullian, who nevertheless prayed for the Empire,<sup>3</sup> nor the philosophical scruples of Origen as to the use of force against an enemy, nor the anger of Lactantius, exasperated by the atrocities of the persecution, should mislead us. All these do not alter the facts, and in particular, that of the presence of Christians in the courts, in the army, and in the magistracies, when this was not made impossible for them. And moreover, the ecclesiastical magisterium, whose good sense condemned voluntary or provoked martyrdom, did not adopt or explicitly defend the objectionable ideas referred to, though it is obvious that the Church would have been accused of doing so if she had really regarded men like Tertullian as the most authentic interpreters of her doctrine. The opinion which regards Christianity as one of the most active solvents urging the Roman Empire towards its end seems difficult to establish, to say the least.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Bk. II, pp. 371-373.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 1156.

<sup>3</sup> *Apologeticum*, xxxii.



Nevertheless, we will not deny the long antagonism between Church and State. But this was maintained or only too frequently renewed precisely by the repeated persecutions. When these definitely ceased, the Christians in the Empire had no further reason to regard themselves as other than true Romans: the State, by frankly recognising at last their right to existence, admitted their share in responsibility for the public good, which, moreover, their private virtues disposed them to serve faithfully, and thus they definitely rallied to the terrestrial city which had hitherto shown them only a hostile countenance. St. Ambrose in the fourth century will be a type of these truly Roman Christians. But during two centuries a long and cruel misunderstanding, due to old conceptions, maintained on both sides the idea of the incompatibility between the Church and the Empire.

### *Real Opposition between the Christian Spirit and that of Antiquity*

It is only too clear, moreover, that the Christian outlook could not altogether coincide with that of Antiquity, even when this was purified from a number of prejudices. It was indeed precisely a difference in spirit which, in the eyes of Authority and of Roman opinion, in cultivated society as well as in plebeian circles, caused Christians to be regarded with mistrust. However respectful they may have been towards the laws, however obedient to the emperor, loyal towards the Empire, and devoted to the common good, they did not and could not belong wholly to the earthly fatherland, and did not put this "above everything else." They looked beyond the frontiers of space and time. Hence a certain lack of interest in the course of the things of this world, which was a subject of reproach, as involving less apparent zeal for the defence of Roman territory and *a fortiori* for its extension. But to these defects of a temporal nature there was a twofold counterpart, as is shown by the history of Christianity in the first ages of the Empire.

## § 3. CHRISTIANS AND THE PUBLIC GOOD

### *Christians Serving the Public Good by their Special Virtues*

Less occupied than others by the affairs of this world, and indifferent to death, even when they did not desire it to come quickly

as the gate of the new life which would consummate their union with Christ, Christians provided manifold examples of virtues previously very rare, and of new kinds of heroism: contempt for riches, purity of morals (the safeguard for the future of the race),<sup>1</sup> charity without measure, acceptance of suffering and death rather than the renunciation of the highest of ideals, and faith in a God of love. Could such a number of manifestations of individual excellence during centuries, such efforts, so many sacrifices, and such courage, often superhuman, fail to do as much or more for the good of the State and the progress of the world as even the most sincere and active conformity, as inculcated by traditional patriotism? When the apologists asked the emperors for peace for Christians, whose devoted service they offered to them, they were not offering something which was of no value.<sup>2</sup>

### *Christianity the Ally of Roman Civilisation*

Less concerned, perhaps, with the material protection of this Empire, to which their desires were not confined, and which a certain number of them thought they ought not to serve by arms, being pacific in mind and inclined to pacifism, Christians regarded the world beyond the Roman frontiers with somewhat different sentiments from those of the mass of their fellow-citizens. But their sentiments did not run counter to the true interests of the Roman idea in trying to realise the Christian ideal—quite the contrary.

Historians have pointed out the lack of curiosity in ancient peoples for things not included in their normal daily life. "The horizon of peoples of classical antiquity," wrote E. Albertini recently in his *History of the Roman Empire*,<sup>3</sup> "was voluntarily limited; they deliberately left outside their influence and even outside their knowledge, great portions of humanity. The Romans persisted in this attitude after the Christian era, in spite of the extension of their Empire, and in spite of the contacts with new nations which this

<sup>1</sup> "The activity of Christianity did not only spread the idea of human brotherhood; another great benefit it conferred was the affirmation of a sexual morality which had been decidedly lacking in the Greco-Latin world. Its precepts assured fruitful unions. During fourteen centuries, the restriction of births will be more or less abolished" (A. Landry, *Quelques aperçus concernant la dépopulation dans l'antiquité gréco-romaine*, pp. 20-21, in *Revue historique*, Vol. CLXXVII, 1936, pp. 1-33).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Bk. II, pp. 534-535.

<sup>3</sup> Ch. xi, p. 27.

extension involved. They made no effort to complete and co-ordinate the information they acquired through the action of circumstances. The emperors aimed at nothing more than having a good guard on the frontiers, and regulating the admission of barbarians into the Empire by fixing the numbers to be allowed and the places and times of entry. They did not try to take a longer view."

But the outlook of Christians was larger, more generous, and richer in promise for the future. Curiosity, and still more a care for the world beyond the frontiers: these characteristics Christians possessed from the first, because, from the beginning and ever afterwards, the "missionary" spirit was active in the Church, and this led its children, precisely because of the words of Christ, to labour at converting "all nations," for the well-being of all mankind. Doubtless geographical ignorance, which they possessed in common with their contemporaries, led them to think that already their first generation had reached the extremities of the earth. But even so we should not attribute too much importance to the passage in St. Paul in which we find a statement of this kind,<sup>4</sup> which is, moreover, only a quotation from a psalm.<sup>5</sup> We may allow that, having reached Spain, and thinking perhaps that equally enterprising pioneers had accomplished a similar task in other directions, the apostle may have said rhetorically that the Christian conquest was nearing its end, but certainly the following generations must have understood very soon that there was far more yet to do. The second and third centuries saw the evangelisation of the Empire in all its provinces. But in addition, its frontiers had already been crossed by successors of the Apostles. Persia, which was not a barbarian country but the seat of one of the most ancient civilisations in the world, may have been reached already in the Apostolic age, and in any case it possessed churches already by the third century, and we have seen that other far off lands heard the preaching of Christianity in the course of the same period.

Those who thus made it heard were not missionaries from Rome. But they came from the Empire, and whether they willed it or not, they represented Roman civilisation, and their spiritual conquests would have been of service to Rome, at least morally, if Rome had then paid attention to them, as she would begin to do with Constantine and his sons, and as Byzantium would do still more in the

<sup>4</sup> *Rom.* x, 18.

<sup>5</sup> *Ps.* xviii, 5.

time of Justinian. In this way Christian "pacifism," if such existed, was if not a servant, at least an ally of ancient civilisation.

### *Christianity Goes beyond the Roman Empire*

Certainly the preachers of the Christian religion had undertaken a much higher mission. Yet we may stress the very great historical interest of the fact that, whereas about the year 300 the Roman Empire kept itself within its boundaries, incidentally immense in extent, and which had been given a last advance through the victorious war of 297 putting them beyond the Tigris, the Kingdom of Christ already overflowed these limits on almost every side. It may have begun to overflow the imperial *limes* in Britain,<sup>6</sup> as in Northern Africa, and in any case it was across the Danube, in the midst of the land of the Goths, and in Armenia, from whence it will almost immediately reach Caucasian Georgia. It was also in Persia, and had reached as far as the Indies, or at least as far as their gates, and it was in Arabia and the coast of Abyssinia. It occupied practically the Empire of Alexander joined to that of Cæsar, and also some places still further away. At the same time we must bear in mind that, except in Armenia, and in Persia to an extent which it is difficult to estimate, in all these distant countries there were as yet only small and isolated Christian communities.

## § 4. CHRISTIANITY OVERCOMES RESISTANCE AND OBSTACLES

### *Rapid Diffusion of Christianity*

The great Christian conquest which came about between the reign of Tiberius and that of Constantine was that of the Roman Empire, even though the task was not complete and, as we have seen, the degree of success varied according to the region. Vast though the space covered was, it had required only a relatively short space of time to accomplish this. Though never interrupted, the movement seems to have been accelerated or amplified at certain times, so that we can discern its chief stages.

Already at the end of the first century, the word of the Apostles

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Bk. III, pp. 778-779.

and their immediate successors had announced the coming of Christ in Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor, Thrace, Macedonia and in Greece, on the confines of Illyria, in Italy, almost certainly in Spain, very probably in Egypt and probably also along the southern coasts of Gaul and in the province of Africa. The second century had witnessed fresh progress: the church of Lyons and the church of Carthage appear in history, and those of the great cities of Northern Italy like Milan and Ravenna go back to that time or one just after it; and in the same period the Christian faith penetrated to the interior of the Asiatic provinces. But it was in the third century that we find the second phase of the wide diffusion of Christianity: the Eastern half of the Empire seems by then to have been completely evangelised<sup>1</sup> and already in great part won for the new faith. In the West, Christian communities were multiplied in Italy and Africa; many others are also mentioned in Spain, and the evangelisation of Gaul was relatively advanced; the Faith reached the Rhine and crossed the Channel, while numerous Christian centres also manifested themselves along the Danube and in the neighbouring countries.

All this had taken place in about two and a half centuries. It was neither an instantaneous revolution, nor a slow progress, but a rapid and continuous growth, though not a uniform one, and at the end the most profound transformation the ancient world ever underwent was virtually complete. The victory had been obtained at the price of very many sacrifices, but its relative rapidity is all the more remarkable in view of the number of obstacles that had to be overcome.

### *The Difficulties which had to be Surmounted*

For the ideal of the ancient city, which so to speak was one with itself, inasmuch as the gods adored by the Greeks and Romans were the gods of the State, and in the Roman Empire the official religion had come to be summed up in the cult of the emperor, Christianity, without aiming at wholly destroying the former, substituted a new ideal which makes man, the citizen of the earthly city, a candidate

<sup>1</sup> But in point of fact, extensive tracts of the interior had escaped Christian preaching, for even as late as the sixth century, John of Ephesus, passing through Asia Minor, discovered numerous pagans as yet unconverted (John of Ephesus or of Asia, *Commentarii de beatis orientalibus et historiæ ecclesiasticæ fragmenta*, ed. Cureton, Oxford, 1853).

for a higher city, which St. Augustine will call the City of God. It taught the distinction between God and Cæsar, but no longer made any distinction between men, having no room for what the Gospel calls the "acceptance of persons," putting on the same plane rich and poor, freemen and slaves, Greeks or Romans and barbarians, and giving to all as a rule of life the practice of a moral system which none of the philosophies or religions of antiquity had equalled, however elevated some may have been, and one of inexorable purity. What a re-education must have been required in order to bring about its acceptance!

Doubtless a religious evolution, which had taken place parallel to the Christian development, and quite often against it, had prepared the way. The success of the oriental religions in the Roman world from the first to the third centuries proves that many were then seeking something which polytheism and Greco-Roman tradition could not give them.<sup>2</sup> These cults of the Phrygian *Magna Mater*, the Egyptian divinities, Syrian Baals or of Mithra had a great attraction, and at first, as in the case of Christianity, made the political authorities anxious. Hence the alternate attitudes of severity and toleration or favour towards Cybele or Isis or Mithra or the neo-Pythagorean religion. Hence also the reform of Claudius, who incorporated the Phrygian religion into the sacerdotal framework of the Roman state by curbing its exuberance, and hence also the prohibition of the little Pythagorean church, which was probably too independent.<sup>3</sup> Hence again the adoption by the emperors themselves of the solar cults of Syria or Persia, constituting the monarch an incarnation or image of the supreme deity.

### *Opposition between Christianity and Eastern Religions Flourishing in the Roman Empire*

The various Eastern religions had a great advantage in their favour from the human standpoint, and one which constituted an important difference between them and Christianity: from the first to the third century they came into such close relations among themselves as to constitute almost a religious Syncretism, culminating in the Solar Monotheism officially professed by an emperor like

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Bk. I, Introduction, pp. 31 *et seq.*

<sup>3</sup> Cf. the works of J. Carcopino mentioned in Bk. I, p. 31, n. 13; p. 35, n. 24 and n. 27.

Aurelian and later by Julian, or in the purified Monotheism of the adorers of the *Summus Deus*,<sup>4</sup> as was perhaps Constantius Chlorus, and at the same time they came to terms with the traditional beliefs of Hellenism and of Rome by adaptations such as those often pointed out, finding for instance in Mithra the characteristics of Apollo, or offering for the adoration of its new disciples a Syrian Baal under the name of Saturn. Further, they in no way forbade their followers to participate in the official worship of the imperial divinity. It was quite otherwise with Christianity, which like Judaism taught the strictest Monotheism, and refused to take part in the religious adoration of the emperor and in the sacrifices offered to him as to a veritable deity. This refusal was tolerated by the Roman State in the case of the Jews, who were authorised to substitute for sacrifice a simple mark of respect, and for invocation of the divinity of the emperor a prayer for him, in virtue of the agreement made between their nation and Rome before the annexation.<sup>5</sup> The Christians never enjoyed any like privilege.

There were other differences, which were not calculated to improve their position: although the oriental religions sometimes introduced into Roman circles some moral ideas superior to those prevalent there, Mithraism in particular presenting an ideal of purification and rectitude which has been rightly stressed, a preoccupation with moral ideas never held in them a place comparable to that which it has in the Christian religion. While they offered their followers the hope of salvation and immortality, these religions did so as an effect to be expected from the observance of rites which purified only symbolically, rather than as the fruit of a real personal reform. In other words, Christianity required much more from those who accepted it.

Humanly speaking, these other religions seem to have had all that was needed to enjoy a better fortune in the Roman Empire than the Christian religion, and were calculated to attract everyone and repulse none. One could adore Mithra or Serapis, or even the unnamed *Summus Deus*, who however was not the "jealous God" of Jews and Christians, without saying farewell to any human pleasure, and without denying Jupiter Capitolinus or ceasing to be devout to the emperor. How could the emperor, and the magistrates,

<sup>4</sup> Cf. P. Batiffol, *La paix constantinienne*: Excursus B, pp. 188 et seq.; *Summus Deus, Le monothéisme dans le paganisme*.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Bk. I, Introduction, p. 33.

and Roman society in general be otherwise than favourably disposed towards these religions, which tended to coalesce into one, and at the same time to be integrated into the religious system of the Roman Empire?

Yet all this favour and benevolence did not bring about a lasting success for Syncretism. The progress of the religions of the East, and then of the Solar Monotheism which summed them up, lasted for three centuries. But from the day when the protection of the civil power was withdrawn from them after the conversion of Constantine, they declined so rapidly that in not much more than a century they had become little more than a memory.

### *The Attitude of Christians in Face of Opposition and Violence*

The apparent paradox in the development of Christianity is that it took place, by contrast, in so little time, in spite of the opposition of authority, and this the authority of the Roman government, accompanied for a long time by an attitude of contempt and hatred on the part of the masses of the people who were often fanatically opposed to it. And the paradox is found still more in the attitude which Christians themselves maintained in face of this threefold hostility. They offered absolutely no opposition, not even the shadow of resistance other than passive, and certainly no armed resistance, for down to the end of the persecutions there was never the slightest revolt on the part of the Christians. Nor was there any legal resistance: such a thing could not even be conceived in the Empire, where there did not exist the slightest juridical means of opposing the imperial will. When from the third century Christians were really numerous, and when, in Tertullian's words, which were truer than when they had been written some fifty years previously, Christians were everywhere, in the prætoria, in the army, in the courts, and in all the professions,<sup>6</sup> a violent resistance might not have been a simple act of despair. But it was never contemplated. The conduct of Christians during three centuries, in face of rigorous measures so often renewed, consisted simply in the application pure and simple of the principle of physical non-resistance to evil, and strict conformity with the spirit and even the letter of the Gospel concerning the acceptance of injuries. During two and a half cen-

<sup>6</sup> [This is a *précis*. The actual quotation from Tertullian is given in Bk. III, p. 819.—Tr.]



turies they allowed themselves calmly to be decimated in the name of the laws, bending their necks to the sword, mounting the scaffolds, descending into the heat of the mines, evoking first the astonishment and then the admiration of the pagans, some of whom were converted by this limitless and calm heroism.

They certainly did not welcome this persecution. But they used against it one weapon only, that of spiritual defence, i.e. not only prayer, which they addressed to God, but also an effort of persuasion addressed to men, the deliberate methodical and scholarly effort of the apologists, who endeavoured to convince men's minds, and the spontaneous and daily efforts of the ordinary Christians, tending, almost without thinking, to win men's hearts by their example and their charity.

We cannot say that the first apologists, who dedicated their pleas for the Christian religion to the rulers themselves, had much success. Their works may have dissipated the prejudices or errors of educated people, and even have inspired some emperors—if indeed they read such works—with more favourable sentiments, and doubtless sometimes brought about or prepared the way for conversions. But these expositions, full of wise considerations, were not able to obtain for Christians the legal recognition of what we moderns call liberty of conscience and freedom of worship. Nevertheless, by its incessant progress Christianity multiplied its recruits, whom the civil authority at length wearied of persecuting, and the hostile masses in the end allowed themselves to be moved both by the deaths of the martyrs, whose constancy never failed, and by the spectacle of lives the virtues of which succeeded in conquering prejudices, ignorance, and misunderstandings.

## § 5. THE CAUSES OF THE CHRISTIAN VICTORY

It is not surprising that the paradox of a victory which seemed in itself so improbable, against powers so difficult to move, provided later apologists down to our own time with a first-rate argument in favour of the intrinsic superiority of Christianity. It would indeed be surprising if the contrary were the case. Such a history is well calculated to suggest, nay even to impose the idea of a providential plan, or, to use the philosophical terminology of to-day, a transcendent religion realising itself in the world.

But since this was brought about by human factors the action of which admits of analysis and examination, the determination of the causes, moral and social, which explain the triumph of Christianity in the field of history, seems called for to terminate our study.

### *External Causes*

A first category of causes, which we may call external, is connected not with the nature itself of Christianity but with the conditions in which its propagation took place.

### *The Unification of the Ancient World by Rome*

The state of the world at the commencement of our era, characterised by the political unification, under the sceptre of Rome, of the whole Mediterranean basin, which was at that time the center of civilisation, had already impressed the ancients. In spite of the survival of ethnical peculiarities, the vitality of which we know better to-day, an undeniable political unity, accompanied by a religious unity which was at least external, representing the extension to the whole Empire of the cult of Rome and the Augustus, had come into being with the Roman conquest and the establishment of the imperial regime at the very moment when the Church was to be born. This provided undeniable facilities for the diffusion of the Gospel message. Christians had already noted this in early times. The Spanish fifth century poet Prudentius wrote thus: "It was God who subjected all the peoples to the Romans in order to prepare the way for Christ."<sup>1</sup> But long before that, Origen had remarked<sup>2</sup> that the unity of the Empire had usefully co-operated in the remarkable success of Christian preaching. If, he said, instead of a single prince, there had been a number of kings, the various peoples would have remained strangers to one another, and the precept "Go and teach all nations. . ." would have been decidedly difficult to put into practice. The birth of Christ in the reign of Augustus coincided with the period which gathered, as it were, into one collection the greater part of the inhabitants of the world. Being itself a doctrine of peace, Christianity needed peace in order to triumph. "Already in the middle of the third century, Origen thus enunciates the apologetical thesis concerning the providential role of the Roman

<sup>1</sup> *Ad Symmachum*, ii, 582.

<sup>2</sup> *Contra Celsum*, II, xxx.

Empire, which in the two following centuries will have a more ample development and an increasing importance.”<sup>3</sup> This is certainly true.

Given other conditions and in different countries, hostile or at least strangers to one another in ideas, could the preaching of the Apostles and their successors have been carried on in the same way? We have already pointed out at the beginning of this history that Christianity spread more rapidly in the Roman Empire than in the neighbouring countries, and yet Christian propaganda began on the Eastern border of the Empire. From Judea it was not so far, as the crow flies, to Babylonia as to Greece, not so far to Persia as it was to Rome, not so far to Abyssinia as it was to Gaul or Spain. The Churches of Greece, Italy, Gaul and Spain nevertheless preceded those of Persia, Arabia or Abyssinia. The relative facility of communications certainly explains this difference: the sea is easier to cross than the desert. But geography does not explain everything: history plays its part as well. The vast network, with at least the externals of a uniform civilisation, which had gradually been formed by the Roman Empire, offered the best scope for the development of religious propaganda.

Possibly also this Greco-Roman world, possessing respected religious traditions but not a real religious faith, was more ready to accept a new religion than was a people like the Persians, who had higher and purer beliefs, more deeply rooted in men's minds, and in consequence were likely to offer a greater spiritual resistance to other teaching.

### *Moral and Religious Causes*

But already we come here to the order of moral causes, and in this order we find the main reasons for the victory of Christianity. They may be reduced to one: Christianity brought an answer to the deepest aspirations of mankind which these had never before received.

### *Superiority of the Christian Ideal*

These aspirations aim at an expansion of being which life refuses to the majority of mankind, by reason of the precariousness of their

<sup>3</sup> P. de Labriolle, *La réaction païenne*, p. 150. He refers us to texts indicated by Fuchs, *Neue philologischen Untersuchungen*, herausgeg. von Werner Jaeger, Heft 3: *Augustin und der antike Friedensgedanke*, Berlin, 1926, p. 162.

material situation or of the trials they undergo, and which even the most fortunate can realise only imperfectly, inasmuch as there is always something more to desire beyond what one already has, and because even if we manage to acquire more, it all has to come to an end. In other words, we aspire to a life which is eternal and, as it were, divine, and this aspiration Christianity satisfies by its promise of union with God in a love without end, thanks to the Redemption which Christ has brought about.

Certainly, the other religions which arose in the East, those of the mysteries of Mithra, the *Magna Mater*, Isis and the Baals, had also claimed to give a similar message of salvation and immortality. But the differences between them and Christianity are manifest. We have already mentioned them.<sup>4</sup> The accomplishment of their promises was conditioned by the knowledge of their mysteries and the practice of their rites; it all began with an initiation, linked doubtless with a purification, but this was external rather than internal. However essential its own rites are in the Christian religion, they are intimately bound up with the idea of charity, that is the fatherly love of God for man, and man's filial love for God, and the fraternal love of men for each other as children of God, and the rigorous requirement of a moral virtue which is simply the application of this charity to all domains. Neither Mithraism, the most elevated of the oriental religions which gained numerous converts in the Roman world, nor the later Syncretism, nor the Monotheism of the worshippers of the *Summus Deus*, preached anywhere the equivalent of the words of St. Paul concerning the charity which must accompany all things, and without which nothing is of any value.

Apparently many realised that this was something really new, and were struck by it. It explained the superhuman courage of Christians, and their supreme calm in presence of death, which was so disconcerting, sometimes so irritating, but which little by little compelled admiration and won sympathy not only for those who gave such extraordinary examples, but also for the doctrine they believed and taught. The apologetics of martyrdom, "semen est sanguis christianorum," in Tertullian's words,<sup>5</sup> owed its effectiveness not only to its appeal to the emotions, but also to the learning of a long and important lesson.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *supra*, pp. 1222-1225.

<sup>5</sup> *Apologeticum*, i, 13.

The apologetic of charity accompanied it. How many souls were moved, and led to meditate before the love shown by Christians not only for their brethren but for all men as, following a persecution which had decimated their ranks, the survivors spent themselves in the service of a whole city on the occasion of an outbreak of plague or after an earthquake! <sup>6</sup>

Lastly, there were in pagan Society in Rome and elsewhere some who were disgusted with the fables and the moral mediocrity of the old Greco-Roman polytheism, or repelled by the inhuman passivity of Stoicism, whose spiritual needs could not be satisfied by the myths of the oriental religions, and whose thirst for God could not be quenched by the worship of the *Summus Deus*. These found what they lacked in the teaching of the Gospel, the Apostles, and the early Fathers of the Church. These Christian doctrines were more calculated to capture men's souls without forcing them than was Stoicism, and they revealed a God closer to man than the one presented by a cold Deism, and this God who had become Man was not at all a mythical being like Attis, Osiris or Mithra, deities whom their legends represent as having been more or less mixed up with humanity, but who never really belonged to human history, whereas Jesus Christ really lived among men and died for them. Thus Christianity spoke to men's hearts in a way no other doctrine had ever done.

### *The Universal Character of the Christian Religion*

Moreover, Christianity spoke to the hearts of all men. This gives us a last trait in which the Christian religion is superior to all others: its universal character. Here moral and social factors combine, for the appeal is to all, great and small, rich and poor, educated and simple, and all in answering the appeal find their happiness.

The ancient cults had not formally excluded any particular category of worshippers, but the official religions of Greece and Rome were city-religions, and those who counted for little in a city, or counted hardly at all, as slaves, received small attention, and felt themselves more or less outsiders in the temples. They could take

<sup>6</sup> As happened, for instance, on the occasion of the plague which followed the Decian persecution (cf. Pontius, *Vita Cypriani*, ix-x; St. Cyprian, *De mortalitate*, xv-xvi; *Ad Demetrianum*, x, xvi; Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxii, 7-9), or that which ravaged the states of Maximin Daia (cf. Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, IX, viii, 13-14).

refuge in secondary cults, those of the domestic *lares*, the divinities of waters and woods, etc., but in doing so would they not be confessing their inferiority? The oriental religions were certainly more open: they might even be called universal, for a slave there rubbed shoulders with his master, and no regard was had for social rank. But very soon these religions came to an agreement with the official cults, were to some extent fused with them, and ultimately participated in the State religion. How could the prejudices of an aristocratic society such as that of the Roman Empire fail to make their influence felt in this matter? How could the humble feel quite as much at home in a sanctuary where the Mithraic "pater" might be also the Roman "pontifex," as in a Christian Church?

It is hardly necessary to repeat that Christianity had long announced itself to be the religion of the humble. The ironical remarks of Celsus on this matter<sup>7</sup> find an echo without any hesitation or reserve in declarations by Tertullian or Origen, as also later on in those of St. Jerome, and the popular character of the majority of the Christian inscriptions in Rome, for instance, leaves no room for doubt as to the prominent part played by humble folk in the Church. But we must always bear in mind that there never was any exclusive attitude in this matter, and that this religion of the simple and poor, who found in it what they could not find anywhere else, never ceased in the course of the two and a half centuries during which it was taking possession of the Roman world, to draw to it in ever increasing numbers the representatives of the social, intellectual and moral *élite* of this world. And if, in fine, in order to try to estimate the strength of the forces which Christianity had succeeded in making its own when the Roman State gave up the fight and left it a field free for its final conquest, we are asked whether it gained more in proportion from among the *élite* or among the masses, we should probably have to make distinctions which would once more show its power of adaptation to the various states of mind of those seeking religious satisfaction, and the variety of spiritual goods it could put before them.

### *The Cult of the Saints*

In the cities of some importance, where mental life was, not indeed deeper, but often more alert, and where men were more ready

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 1215.

to receive the new currents of ideas, and were less slaves of their habits, Christianity doubtless made fairly rapid progress among the masses. If these gave rise to manifestations of great hostility and of fanaticism, they also produced great movements of conversion.

In the smaller towns and the country parts, in which people were naturally more attached to local customs, there was certainly greater resistance, or at any rate the opposition of a stronger inertia, and possibly this was finally vanquished only through one of the elements of the religious life which, without in any way modifying the intransigence of Christian Monotheism, attenuated, as we might say, that which its apparent severity might make difficult to accept in the case of relatively primitive minds accustomed to all the religious varieties of polytheism. The cultus of the saints, which began with that of the martyrs, provided them with a satisfaction which they instinctively sought, and carried on the idea of a populous heaven such as they loved, and an earth in which many localities were as before consecrated by the memory of holy presences. The tombs of the martyrs and confessors took the place of the sanctuaries of local divinities, the cultus of which was sometimes very difficult to eradicate from the inhabitants of the country parts, the *pagani*,<sup>8</sup> from whom paganism takes its name, and it would probably have been still more difficult if the cultus of new heavenly protectors, who were likewise immediately connected with particular places, had not been substituted for it. By the cultus of the martyrs, which was destined to have so great an expansion following the peace of the Church, after it had spontaneously and silently developed in the midst of Christian communities during the centuries of persecution, and to which would be added later on the cultus of other saints, "Christianity, a universal religion, continued to a certain extent the local religions,"<sup>9</sup> which could hardly disap-

<sup>8</sup> On the process which gave rise to the religious significance of the word *Paganus* (whence comes our own word "pagan"), shown either by deriving it from its primitive sense of "peasant," or from its secondary meaning of "civil" as opposed to "military," inasmuch as a non-Christian was not enrolled in the "militia Christi," cf. J. Zeiller, *Paganus: Etude de terminologie historique*, in *Collectanea Friburgensia*, New series, Fasc. xvii, Paris, and Fribourg in Switzerland, 1917. This study concludes that, contrary to the opinion maintained by Zahn (*Paganus*, in *Neue Kirchliche Zeitschrift*, Vol. X, 1899, pp. 18 *et seq.*), it was indeed from the original meaning of "paganus" as "peasant," and not from the later sense of "civil" that the religious meaning of the word arose.

<sup>9</sup> A. Dufourcq, *Comment, dans l'Empire romain, les foules ont-elles passé des religions locales à la religion universelle, le christianisme?*, in *Revue d'Histoire*

pear completely at once. Thanks to the witnesses to Christ, and by a providential economy, the repugnance or hesitation which people whose ideas were still somewhat rudimentary might have had in regard to the doctrine of Christ gradually disappeared.

Christianity, which provided an answer to the highest aspirations of souls eager to find a truly divine God, adapted itself in this way to the instinctive human desire to find a religion near to mankind, and this in two ways. First and foremost, it did so by its doctrine of the Incarnate God, who really became a man among men, but it also did so by this practice of the cult of the saints which, by introducing between man and God a chain of intercessors and friends, seemed to shorten the distance and bring about the union between earth and heaven. To all men, whether the most particular or the simplest, the Church offered a habitation both large enough and homely enough to unite them all together in one fraternal society. Less than three centuries after its foundation by Christ, and after many vicissitudes, which were an almost perpetual proof of its force of resistance and its power of expansion, this habitation was already well filled, and even so the growth of the Christian people showed no signs of slackening.

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*et de Littérature religieuses*, Vol. IV, 1899, pp. 239 *et seq.* Separate edition under the title: *La christianisation des foules*.



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